THE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

AS REVEALED IN THE POETRY OF THE PERIOD

SAMUEL WHITE PATTERSON

STUDIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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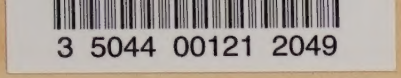
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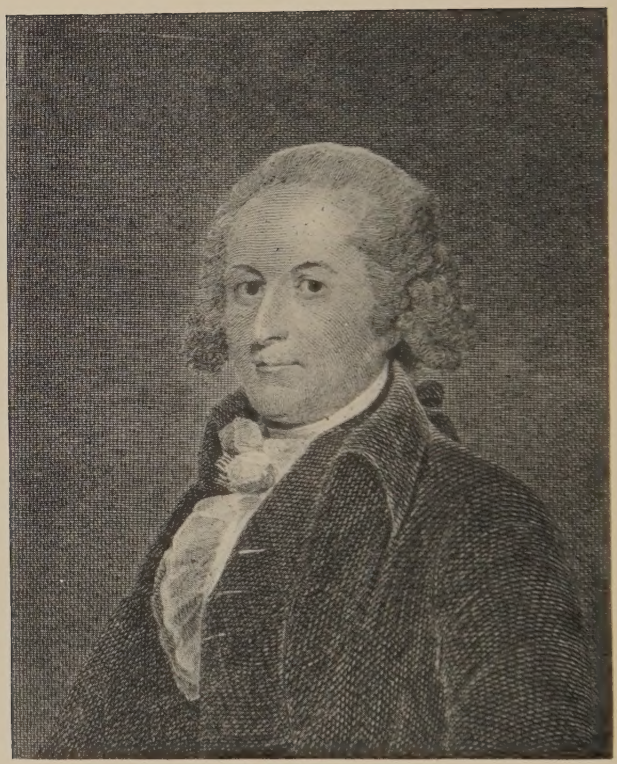

JOHN TRUMBULL

The Spirit of The American Revolution

AS REVEALED IN THE POETRY OF THE PERIOD

A STUDY OF AMERICAN PATRIOTIC VERSE FROM 1760 TO 1783

BY

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PREFACE

The present study seeks to show forth the spirit that moved men during the struggle for American independence as that spirit is revealed in the verse of the period from 1760 when George III acceded to the throne of England to 1783 when peace ensued. It has been thought wise to quote rather liberally not only from the best work that was produced but from work of little or no literary merit and worthy of consideration and remembrance on no other account than the purpose in hand. The vast mass of the poetic output is thus made to speak for itself as a whole through selections widely varying in quality and worth. At the same time it serves to illustrate the prose narrative of the conflict, written for the most part on broad general lines and necessary for the better understanding of the verse.

Some works have seemed to merit rather full quotation by reason either of their intrinsic literary worth or of their importance in connection with the event that inspired their composition or of the fact that omission of any part would impair their substance or their effect. Loyalist poetry has not been overlooked but has been made to lend an edge to the conflict of opinion.

No one familiar with the literature of the period treated will fail to note the obligations another laborer must always be under who enters the old vineyard. The bibliographers whose works are cited have been especially helpful as guides to the original sources. Excellent previous

work has been done in the field considered. The appended bibliography contains in part the titles of the works which have formed with the early newspapers the basis for the present study. Many of these are difficult to obtain save in the largest libraries but there are others quite accessible to all. Throughout the work a number of authorities are cited from time to time in the text and in the foot-notes. I have not quoted always from first editions because, frequently, such a course would do injustice to the poet concerned without helping the reader better to appreciate the spirit of the times. A notable example will be found in Freneau who very carefully revised his work in 1786 and later, and whose works are now within easy reach in the well-edited volumes of Professor Pattee referred to in the text as "Poems." In the matter of biographical detail, I have tried to subordinate it to its proper position, giving such facts as would elucidate the poem quoted or the event discussed, reserving the greater space, usually in the text itself, for the more significant persons of the period.

Of course, Professor Tyler's monumental work on the period treated stands alone in its class. Not to mention this scholar and the inspiration emanating from his labors would be an unpardonable oversight. His great study of our early literature is absorbing. It is, however, specifically a "literary study" whereas the present work seeks to subordinate the purely literary merit of a piece of verse to its merit in exposition of the events, characters and discussions of the revolutionary era.

I wish here to acknowledge my debt to the authorities of the libraries whose services I have been pleased to

accept in the no light work of securing many times for my use the volumes and papers necessary and in their care. Especially, in this respect, I would mention the librarians and their assistants of the New York Historical Society Library, Columbia University Library, and the New York Public Library. Particularly, to Mr. Victor H. Paltsits, formerly state historian of New York, and, at present, keeper of manuscripts in the New York Public Library, am I indebted for scholarly counsel in the matter of illustrations. He has advised the rejection of the so-called Freneau portrait upon the ground that "no life-portrait exists of him." Upon investigation of his authorities, which he kindly gave me, I have accepted his judgment.

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"William Pitt and National Revival" (G. Bell and Sons, London), Crawshaw's "Literary Interpretation of Life," Acton's "Cambridge Modern History," Smith's "United States: An Outline of Political History;" Messrs. Harper and Brothers—Lodge's "A Short History of the English Colonies in America," Green's "A Short History of the English People;" and "A History of the English People;" Messrs. A. S. Barnes and Co.—"Magazine of American History;" Messrs. J. Munsell's Sons—Stone's "Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign;" The Sons of the Revolution of New York—Johnston's "Memoir of Col. Benjamin Tallmadge;" The Princeton Historical Association—Pattee's "The Poems of Philip Freneau;" The Historical Society of Pennsylvania—"Memoirs of the Life and Writings of John Dickinson;" The American Book Company—Green's "A Short History of the English People."

I wish to express my appreciation of the advice and criticism offered from time to time by Professor Francis Hovey Stoddard, of New York University. Professor Henry Phelps Johnston of the College of the City of New York I wish to thank for his permission to quote his authoritative works. Finally, to many valued friends whom it would not be to their liking to name but who by thoughtful word or active service have rendered my labors lighter I wish to express my gratitude.

SAMUEL WHITE PATTERSON.

New York, 1915.

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THE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Spirit of The American Revolution

AS REVEALED IN THE POETRY OF THE PERIOD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

I. American Verse Prior to 1750.

Causes of colonial settlement and social and literary conditions in the Northern, Middle and Southern colonies —Early tone and quality of American literary work— Need of unifying impulse and broadened outlook—Early eighteenth century.

THE English colonies fringing the Atlantic seaboard during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were founded severally through no single cause but rather, broadly speaking, by reason of a threefold struggle: desire for religious freedom, thirst of adventure and interest in trade. New England was essentially different from her neighbors in the middle colonies and in the southern because of the closer communion of her people due in great measure to the union that comes of a common zeal and mutual aspiration. Her leaders were to

a large extent men of education and culture, at first of the English universities but later of their own Harvard, Yale and other and lesser institutions, founded as seminaries chiefly for the ministry of the church. Natural conditions, present and traditional, forbade so close a unity of purpose in the pursuit of letters in the middle and southern colonies. In the one, old-world allegiance went out to no one source but to several while in the other the large areas under cultivation or in the control of great houses obstructed intercourse and tended toward more or less isolation in matters intellectual.

Throughout the century and a half before the American Revolution little was produced in the English colonies that may rightly be termed literature save work born of religious fervor and dogmatic earnestness with aim and purpose single toward informing the elect of God just what the eternal verities are and how the wicked shall be punished and the righteous received into their Father's mansions. What should have tended, it would seem,—if the spirit of the Master had been better and more truly perceived,—thoroughly to unite the peoples gathered in their several places of worship, appears rather to have sown the seed of discord, for we find during the colonial period little but "essays in religious polemics . . . [as] the chief product of the American presses."[1]

The most casual examination of early American verse cannot but evidence its lack of true poetic quality. In both subject-matter and manner of treatment its creators were limited. The Puritan influences of colonial New

1. Brander Matthews's Introduction to Whitcomb's "Chronological Outlines," p. IX.

England would hardly admit of topics drawn from a source other than Holy Writ. Psalm-paraphrasing and solemn meditations were the only necessary ends for the poetic aspiration. It was but consistent to use for subjects such as these a style and a manner at once formal and severe. The seventeenth century produced nothing greater in literature, therefore, than "The Bay-Psalm Book" and the gloomy, dreary waste of "The Day of Doom" of Wigglesworth.

With the dawn of the eighteenth century, stirring political events began to occur or rather the beginnings of a movement only too evidently deep and far-reaching in importance. The intercolonial wars had but begun. Though a considerable proportion of the people were now American by birth, all were still in spirit and sympathies loyally English. Limited as the versifiers yet remained through the lingering Calvinistic influence and their narrow, provincial outlook, a patriotic zeal growing more and more lively tended to broaden their poetic horizon and enable them to provide their countrymen with lyrics, often spirited and timely, such as "Lovewell's Fight," "The Conquest of Canaan," "Song of Braddock's Men,"—work entirely typical of the product of poetic genius prior to the Revolution. These, however, were merely wanderings, vague and confused at times, in poetic paths well-worn. One cannot fail to observe from ever so slight a study of them that no true poet appeared within our borders for nearly two centuries after the landing at Jamestown. Not till Philip Freneau wrote his "Wild Honeysuckle" and "Eutaw Springs" was any poem printed in America worthy the name. We must, indeed, agree

with the spirit of the following: "It would be possible to maintain the thesis that American literature began in 1809 with the publication of Irving's 'Knickerbocker's History of New York,' and certainly, with the exception of Franklin's 'Autobiography,' the 'Federalist,' and Brockden Brown's romances, scarcely any American book written before 1800 is today read for pleasure or by any one except special students. What was published in these United States while they were still colonies of England is of little interest from a literary point of view."[1]

There was needed, indeed, the quickening impulse born of a call that through the lessening of provincial narrowness would show men the folly of many of their petty quarrelings—there was needed the call of patriotic devotion to the preservation of principles that all, in the South as well as in the North, and in creed of any name, might feel and believe were deep and wide in application and great in worth. A call that could make a Virginian Churchman commander-in-chief in the city of the Dissenter surely had within itself the potentiality of union and would in time inspire what could truly be termed a common country. In this connection it will be well to note a recent observation: "Independent America, . . . has displayed from the beginning of the Revolution a somewhat sensitive consciousness of nationality. This was nowhere more evident, at first, than in the efforts made by Americans, almost as soon as their national existence was assured, to enrich their country with a literature of its own. During colonial times there had been a good deal of

1. Introduction; quoted above, p. 18.

publication in America, but little of this had been literary in character. The American writings of the seventeenth century, mostly produced in New England, had been chiefly theological; those of the eighteenth century, before the Revolution, had been chiefly political or historical. Such American work as had taken literary form had been frank and rather amateurish imitation of more or less fashionable English models. That America, as such, possessed anything resembling a native literature had never occurred to anybody."[1]

Such in brief was the state of American colonial literature prior to the struggle for political freedom—all of it, we may say, imitative to a large extent and uninspiring to any modern reader save the student of literary origins, distinctive in its independence of that true tone which we associate with the inspiration of the great and looking abroad to the home-land and the traditions thereof for its spiritual source as the men and women themselves who created it did, in their outlook upon life.

II. The Verse of the Revolution

Character thereof and reasons therefor—The bards of the Revolution—their mission and their method—The three greatest: Hopkinson, Trumbull, Freneau—critical comment thereon—Varied nature of Revolutionary verse —"epic," dramatic, narrative, lyric—The verse of the Revolution: an estimate of its worth.

From the viewpoint of purely literary merit it cannot be said that the verse of the revolutionary epoch any more

1. Barrett Wendell in "The Cambridge Modern History"; Vol. VII: "The United States," p. 740.

than that which appeared before it, merits high praise. But certain it is that the poets of the time put forth their best efforts in the cause they espoused and they at least saw clearly the situation in which they found themselves, realizing vividly the issue in debate. Beyond this, if they failed, it was due to their limitations, past and present. Theirs were still models sanctioned by tradition on both sides of the Atlantic, replete with heroic couplets and biblical and classical allusion.[1] Their experiences were too real and objective to encourage imaginative flights either in prose or verse for the period was essentially prosaic, matter-of-fact, materialistic; and yet, one may say, it was an age, too, strangely blending the idealistic with the practical.

The writers during the period of the American Revolution seemed fully to appreciate their mission. The one great blemish, shall it be said, which they evince was their excessively passionate and vituperative expression. Only seldom did they temper their thought when committing it to writing; only rarely, one feels, did many of them realize the truth of the sayings, "A soft answer turneth away wrath" and "Kind words never die." But then it should be remembered, that in times such as theirs to keep one's temper and to speak sober-mindedly are virtues perhaps of too high an order in the nature of things to expect.

A recent work is at pains to distinguish these several classes of writers: those who are not quite up to their time, who have drunk too deeply of the past and its ways; those on the other hand who seem to have been born out

1. See quotation from Trumbull's "Prospect," pp. 52, ff., below.

of due time and are so far in advance of their day and generation that contemporaries hardly appreciate their worth and therefore neglect justly to appreciate them; and then, again, those who "seem to walk shoulder to shoulder with the age in which they live—neither a step behind nor a step in advance, though always in the front ranks. They utter the thought and feeling of the time while these are still fervent in men's hearts but before they have come to full consciousness. Such men are not prophets or reformers, though they may to a certain extent be leaders—all the more effective because they are not too far in advance of the host. Their truest function is that of interpreters, making the age aware of itself. They teach the true way of advance by making clear the way that is then being traversed, by bringing to light motives and aspirations that are then dominant. They are likely to be the popular writers of their day, though perhaps less secure of the future."[1] Such "reveal merely the superficial aspects of nationality. They see outward forms, or striking events, or popular ideas, and present them vividly and impressively."[2] In a sense, the greater poets of the Revolution take their places with these last. They were memorializers, as it were, writers after the event and extollers thereof: none of them, of course, with possibly one exception, rising to the heights, not even to the summit of the foot-hills. In all the poetry of the period we miss the lofty tone of the greater singers whose mighty notes of patriotism thrill us in such verse as "The Charge of the Light Brigade," or "Old Ironsides." With these

1. Crawshaw: "Literary Interpretation of Life," p. 86.
2. Ibid., p. 202.

the only poem of the Revolution at all comparable is the beautiful "Eutaw Springs" which is a real poem, a pure sustained anthem, unmarred by rancorous hate or gloomy foreboding.

Critics have singled out, and justly so, three writers of the Revolution as especially worthy serious consideration, the authors of "M'Fingal," of "The Battle of the Kegs," and of "Eutaw Springs." Professor Tyler has this to say of these: "Hopkinson took his true place as one of the three leading satirists on the whig side of the American Revolution—the other two being John Trumbull and Philip Freneau. In the long and passionate controversy in which these three satirists bore so effective a part, each is distinguished by his own peculiar note. The political satire of Freneau and of Trumbull is, in general, grim, bitter, vehement, unrelenting. Hopkinson's satire is as keen as theirs, but its characteristic note is one of playfulness. They stood forth the wrathful critics and assailants of the enemy, confronting him with a hot and an honest hatred, and ready to overwhelm him with an acerbity that was fell and pitiless; Hopkinson . . . was too gentle, too tender-hearted, . . . for that sort of warfare. As a satirist, he accomplished his effects without bitterness or violence."[1] In Chapter V we shall read the same critic's opinion of "M'Fingal," the masterpiece of Trumbull. Of the same production, others have been not quite so enthusiastic though they see its merit and consider it in no sense a slavish imitation of Butler's "Hudibras." We may add finally, in passing, that "M'Fingal"

1. Tyler in Stanton's "Manual of American Literature," pp. 50, 51.

was the greatest venture in metrical satire by an American before the appearance of Lowell's "Biglow Papers." Allowing due weight to such criticisms as the above upon the work of Hopkinson and Trumbull, for one feels that they are just, one still believes that, while the influence of the two poets mentioned was undoubtedly wide and deep, the labors of Philip Freneau were so persistent and vigorous, so all-embracing in the selection of topics, in the variety of poetic forms essayed, and so keen and conscious of the inherent rectitude of the patriot cause espoused that they entitle their author to first place among the verse-makers of his time. From a literary standpoint Freneau displayed a greater skill in his nature poems than in his patriotic verse[1] as may be seen by comparing "The Wild Honeysuckle" or "The Honey-Bee" with his ballads and other work. And he showed originality in his treatment of the Indian and of the savage life as witness "The Indian Burying-Ground" and "The Dying Indian." But he was in no sense a great singer, his work is exceedingly unequal in merit and if he lives in the memory of his countrymen it will be on account of his association with the "spirit of '76," the cherished thought of which Americans are not apt soon to let die.

The revolutionary bards produced verse in a wide variety of forms—the epic, the dramatic, the lyric, the narrative. Of the epic, "M'Fingal" is the great representative; yet it has merely the manner and not the spirit of the true epic. The drama, too, found several writers. In 1775, "The Group," a dramatic work by a lady of

1. Save in one instance mentioned above: his poem on the heroes at Eutaw Springs; see p. 194, below.

Massachusetts, Mercy Otis Warren, amused the rebel portion of the populace to the discomfiture of those who still saw no good reason for the great quarrel. And Hugh Henry Brackenridge wrote his impressions of Bunker Hill and of the death of General Montgomery in the same form. They are of little worth apart from the historic interest. Freneau himself was no playwright if he be judged by the fragment quoted in Chapter X[1] and entitled "The Spy," a work surely not an example of great dramatic power. The long narrative poem was not the least that the period produced. "The British Prison Ship" by Freneau is far and away the superior of all others of its type and for a certain strength and the evident feeling of its author, it is not of the worst of its class. All of these —the epic, the dramatic, the narrative—may be said to be without especial distinction except as they are satirical and usually unduly long. In satire, at least, the revolutionary bards, loyalist and patriot alike, attained something akin to eminence, using the instrument of invective and bitterest epithet with no unpracticed hand.

To the lyric we must look, however, for the more truly spontaneous verse of the time. It was the ballad writers who wrote the lines that immediately inspired many a camp-fire circle. It was their songs—short, pithy, pointed flings at the enemy—not always good-tempered, often coarse, even vulgar, frequently humorous, interesting and appealing—it was these surely that helped the cause of king or congress. In stanza forms—length, metre, rhyme, etc.—no end of variety may be discovered, much

1. See pp. 177, ff.

greater indeed than in the longer forms of verse which in most cases merely multiplied the heroic couplet. Examples are not wanting of wretched rhyming and metre; indeed, at times one is tempted to believe that for ingenuity in the making thereof the old bards should be rated high. To say that they used no models would be to speak against the facts. Not only in ballad, but in all the other forms of verse as well, we find indubitable evidence of the influence of the poets of the age of the Restoration and Queen Anne. And this is not to imply that the poets of the Revolution wholly lacked originality but rather to state that in form at least they rarely reached beyond the classic model of the Augustans however much one may find of vigor in forceful phrase or stinging epithet, or discern virility of thought or certainty of feeling in the mind and heart of the bard who sought to express it.

A study of the verse of the period of the American Revolution must surely evidence the fact that judged by literary standards solely it is decidedly reading for the student alone whereas from an historical viewpoint there can be little doubt of its informing quality and human interest. While it established hardly a name in our poetic annals, it was, as we shall see, not without its mission nor unconscious of its worth, nor ineffective in a time of mingled doubt, assurance and national tension.

PART I

THE PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY

CHAPTER II

THE BATTLE OF WORDS

Character of the revolt—not isolated fact but deep-rooted —the colonist's environment and inheritance—The new King, George III, and his purposes—Parliamentary measures—their sponsors and their effect—Gradual change of sentiment from loyalty to revolt—"Dialogue and Ode on the Death of George II"—"On the Accession of His present gracious Majesty"—The Stamp Act and attendant circumstances—Governor Bernard's speech—Loyalists and Patriots. Indications of deeper meaning—Thomas Jefferson's view—John Dickinson—sketch of his life—his "Liberty Song," 1768—A British bishop's sermon—Colonial women and their aid.

IT were, perhaps, a truism to assert that, like all movements grave in character, the revolt of the thirteen British colonies in America was far from being an isolated fact but rather the result of conditions and experiences, deep-rooted and inevitable. The Englishman across the seas in the new world lived through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a social and political environment at once derived from his Anglo-Saxon forebears and developing in a way peculiar to itself. The colonist maintained his affection for the mother-land—her varied religious and social ideals, her institutions, political and commercial; but the very nature of the chang-

ed circumstances compelled in time a fresh interpretation and a viewpoint thoroughly different from that of those who remained in the older home-land.

For such a people progressing and expanding along lines hardly appreciated abroad, a wilful king, endeavoring to fashion the policies of the realm after the manner of his Stuart predecessors, found to his purpose encouraging response and ready aid in a parliament and a ministry dominated by narrow and short-sighted men. "For the first and last time since the accession of the House of Hanover," says Green,[1] "England saw a King who was resolved to play a part in English politics; and the part which George succeeded in playing was undoubtedly a memorable one. During the first ten years of his reign he managed to reduce government to a shadow, and to turn the loyalty of his subjects at home into disaffection. Before twenty years were over he had forced the American colonies into revolt and independence, and brought England to what then seemed the brink of ruin."

The laws of Parliament enacted a century earlier were being once more rigidly enforced in the sixties, at the close of hostilities with France. But such endeavor more strictly to enforce "time's outworn decrees" and thereby to restrict the growing colonial trade in favor of home-markets was now well-nigh impossible of enduring success and merely provocative of discord and promotive of the spirit of union which must lead eventually to separation. Circumstances and ideas had changed materially during the early decades of the eighteenth century. The colonists were conditioned by affairs present and urgent, over which

1. "History of English People," IV, 200-1.

they themselves could have in the long run little if any control. Their commerce had been increasing markedly and the fulfilment of their consequent needs must be unhampered by taxes or regulations made by those oversea who could not be intimate with the state of colonial affairs, nor heartily sympathetic with colonial ideals.[1] Hence, though by many unconsciously felt and appreciated at the time, the deep-seated cause of the quarrel is now clearly apparent and with it what finally must have been the only adequate means of its settlement. Nothing, however, seems clearer through all the years up to the call-to-arms than the earnest and sincere desire on the part of the colonists to have their viewpoint understood, their grievances heard and a satisfying reconciliation effected.

The British ministry under the leadership of such men as Grenville, Townshend and North, notwithstanding appeal after appeal, continued blindly to steer in the face of the storm. The stamp tax must be passed even though common-sense itself protest, and then with its repeal a year later, must the declaration still be made of the undiminished sovereignty of the crown as represented in Parliament over the colonies, not less in the matter of taxation than in all others.[2] And here it must be re-

1. "The measures of repression, in any view, deserve the censure which has been passed on them. They were passionate, indiscriminate, and insulting; bolts of blind wrath launched across the Atlantic by men imperfectly informed as to the situation and ignorant of the character of the people, as transoceanic rulers must always be." Goldwin Smith: "The United States: An Outline of Political History," p. 83.

2. "The present dispute is, what the rights of the crown and parliament are with respect to America, and what they are not . . ." Francis Hopkinson in "A Letter to Lord Howe," December, 1776; in "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings," I, 123.

membered, moreover, that the colonist felt disinclined to admit the power to tax him without his consent as expressed by a representative duly commissioned to speak and act in his behalf. But the very idea of such direct representation had not formed itself as yet in the British mind. There were in Parliament those returned again and again from boroughs all but uninhabited; yet there was none for the growing centres of urban population created so largely through changing conditions of labor and production. It was therefore quite to be expected that the slogan—"taxation without representation is tyranny"—would fall with but little effect on British ears.

It will be interesting and illuminating as well to note first, however, the gradual change of sentiment toward the home government and its representative, the crown, and as the years pass by to see this sentiment crystallize into opposition, hardly alive in the hearts of some, passive and quiescent in others, active and aggressive in a few. In the years 1760 to 1764, we discover several examples in verse of a truly loyal tenor. One, for example, is a formal exercise said to have been "performed at the Public Commencement in the College of Philadelphia, May 23, 1761." It is a dialogue and ode on the death of George II, "His late gracious Majesty," and is, in larger part, a work[1] by Francis Hopkinson, later a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Three stanzas of the ode—there are four in all—are the following:

> The glorious sun, Britannia's king,
> Withdraws his golden light;

1. "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings"; III, 11-82.

His setting ray
Glides swift away,
And yields to conq'ring night.
. . . . . .

Far o'er the wild and wat'ry waste,
Hear the loud cannons roar;
'Till winds convey
The sounds away,
That die along the shore.

But, lo! his sainted soul ascends
High thro' the ethereal road;
And Briton's sighs
Like incense rise,
To waft him to his God.

Another piece of verse of the same year, written in Latin, is dedicated by the "college at Cambridge," to the young monarch, George III. The following year the college of Philadelphia again echoed the note of loyalty in a work, "On the ascension of His present gracious Majesty." This, too, is by Hopkinson[1] though in part by the Rev. Mr. Duché, a Philadelphia clergyman, and consists of a dialogue and ode. It is especially interesting in the light of future events.[2] Lorenzo, one of the char-

1. "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings"; III, 83-88.

2. Hopkinson could write, fifteen years later, "A Political Catechism," in which one question is: "What are the striking outlines of the king of England's character?" and its answer: "Injustice, obstinacy, and folly. He is unjust, because he endeavors to get by force what is denied him by the laws of the realm over which he presides, and in direct violation of his coronation oath: he is obstinate, because he refuses to hear the humble petitions of an oppressed people: and his folly is conspicuous in quarreling with the Americans who loved and honoured him—who were the faithful and zealous contributors

acters in the dialogue, thus exclaims:

> Thrice happy monarch! skill'd in ev'ry art
> To win a nation's smile, and fix their love,
> Thy youthful blossoms are the earnests sure
> Of future glories to thy native land,
> Hence, in the mighty rolls of British fame,
> Thy reign shall shine distinguish'd mid the rest,
> By deeds of valour, piety, and love.

The ode (by Hopkinson) is several stanzas long with a chorus, of which the following will suffice:

> Bright ascending to the skies,
> See Britannia's glory rise!
> Cease your sorrows, cease your fears,
> Night recedes and day appears;
> Another George majestic fills her throne,
> And glad Britannia calls him all her own.
>
> Chorus.
>
> Let the tuneful chorus join,
> And high their voices raise,
> To celebrate in notes divine,
> The youthful monarch's praise.

Closing we hear, with chorus following:

> Hail! Britain, hail! these golden days;
> Illustrious shalt thou shine;
> For George shall gain immortal praise,

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to the support of the crown and dignity, and a never failing and increasing source of wealth to him, and to the merchants and manufacturers of his country." "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings," I, 119.

And Britain, *George,* is thine.
To distant times he shall extend his name,
And give thy glories to a deathless fame.

Certainly, before 1765 there was at least no great disturbance in the family circle, if the bards be taken as our guide.

Within this year of the Stamp Act, however, we note a decided change on the part of many or at least we discover a beginning made in the sowing of the seeds of discord. The verse of that year and the year following gives ample evidence of the new status of affairs. The word "oppression" is found as a title-word to several pieces published. A single title of a work that appeared in New Haven will serve to indicate the spirit of resistance and to give an earnest of what will follow: "A Collection of Verses. Applied to November 1, 1765, etc., including a prediction that the S—p A—t shall not take place in North America. Also a poetical Dream Concerning Stamped Papers." Next year and the one after saw other sentiments expressed upon the "joyful news to America . . . expressive of our more than ordinary joy, on the repeal of the Stamp Act."

A reading of the newspapers and pamphlets of the day, however casual the perusal, tends to reveal the temper of the American mind and to discover the sympathy that is born of like-mindedness.[1] We learn from "The New

1. "Of the thirty-seven newspapers which were published in the colonies, in April, 1775, . . . seven or eight were devoted to the interest of the crown, and twenty-three were devoted to the service of the Whigs." See Sabine: "Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution," I, 49.

York Mercury" how much liked were the stamps and the principle upon which their issue was based. Rumor being rife in the city that the hated stamps were to be stored in "William Castle," fear was entertained as to their safety. "'Tis said those detestable stamps are to be lodg'd at the Castle, and there to remain till further Orders from Home, there being at present no Demand here for such superfluous commodity."[1]

The stamp collector surely held no enviable office—the "Odious and detestable Office of Distributor of Stamps" as we read that it was called. In a piece of doggerel entitled, "A Parody," these lines appear in a colonial newspaper:

> And hence it was the voice of reason,
> However in their present temper,
> Mobs burn in effigy, the stamps.[2]

And we read elsewhere such words as the following from a reported speech of Governor Francis Bernard before the General Assembly of Massachusetts Bay in the autumn of 1765: "I have called you together at this unusual Time, in Pursuance of the unanimous Advice of a very full council, that you may take into consideration the present State of the Province, and determine what is to be done at this critical and dangerous conjuncture. I need not recount to you the violences which have been committed in this Town, nor the Declarations which have been made and still subsist, that the Act of Parliament for granting Stamp-Duties in the British Colonies shall

1. Under date, September 30, 1765.
2. Ibid., September 23, 1765.

not be executed within the Province."[1] The following month, we hear of an assurance being given "the Gentlemen of the Neighboring Provinces, That every Importer of European Goods in this City, have [has] agreed not to import any Goods from England, next Spring, unless the Sugar-Act and the *Oppressive* and *Unconstitutional* Stamp Act are repealed."[2] In the same utterance we read the ominous sentence: "I would not willingly aggravate the Dangers which are before you; I do not think it very easy to do it: This Province seems to me to be upon the Brink of a Precipice; and that it depends upon you to prevent its falling."

The decade before Lexington and Concord proved to be a time of attack and counter-attack on the part of the mother-land and her colonies; vituperation, insult and reproach alike on one side as on the other are reported in the pages of the chronicles of the period. But it would be a mistake to assume that the people of America were all of one mind on the dominant question of the day. On the contrary, there were those, Loyalists or Tories as they were termed, who upheld the hands of the British ministry and their king; who underwent trouble, fear, personal sacrifice even to bodily injury in their championship of the royal cause and who stoutly maintained that the issues were hastening to conflict through a coterie of mere politicians.[3] Nor were these silent while their fellow-Americans were singing the songs of patriotism.

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1. "New York Mercury," October 7, 1765.
2. Ibid., November 4, 1765.
3. See Tyler: "Literary History of the American Revolution," Vol. I, Chap. I.

They, too, from one point of view were patriots and their songs were the songs of patriotism, indeed in a sense, the only true songs thereof while those of the patriots, so-called, were to these loyal folk none other than the outbursts of rebels and traitors. It is not our purpose to dwell at length upon the Tory effusions, but it would be remiss not to quote them occasionally in order to put more clearly the pro-American cause and to hint by contrast, the edge of bitterness and the keenness of rival hopes.

Every phase of the questions of the hour appears to have inspired some one to embalm its memory in verse. We gain in reading it an insight into the feelings and the deep concern with which the issues were met and discussed; we discern in the mere quantity, if not in the quality of the lines which the versifiers put forth, something of the spirit that moved men in a time that truly "tried men's souls."[1]

It is often asserted that in the beginning the feeling in the American colonies did not tend toward independence but rather toward a better understanding with the mother-country as to their rights and a just recognition thereof. However true this may be in general, and doubtless it is quite near the truth, there nevertheless is not wanting an occasional hint that the misunderstanding had in it a greater depth of meaning. Thomas Jefferson himself, be it remembered, was not convinced in the earlier years of the wisdom of complete separation. We read his words to John Randolph as late even as November, 1775: "Believe me, dear Sir, there is not in the

1. See p. 121.

British Empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do, but by the God that made me, I will cease to exist, before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament proposes; and in this I think I speak the sentiments of America."[1] Under date of July, 1768, we find these lines written by John Dickinson[2] of Pennsylvania:

Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor America's name,
In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live;
Our purses are ready,
Steady, Friends, steady,
Not as *slaves,* but as *freemen* our money we'll give.

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1. Ford's edition, "Writings of Thomas Jefferson," I, 493. Quoted also, in part, by Morse in "Thomas Jefferson" (American Statesman Series), p. 31.

2. Author of "The Farmer's Letters" in "Pennsylvania Chronicle," 1767, in which he explains the political conditions then existing between England and America. Soldier, legislator, publicist. "The story of Mr. Dickinson's life forms an important part of the history of Pennsylvania. From the year 1760 until his term of office as President of the Supreme Executive Council expired, in 1783, Mr. Dickinson was probably the most conspicuous person in the service of the state. So, also, from the meeting of the Stamp Act Congress, in 1765, until his death, 1808, Mr. Dickinson was a prominent figure in our national history. He was the first to advocate resistance to the ministerial plan of taxation on constitutional grounds. For more than a year after the enforcement of the Boston Port Bill, according to Mr. Bancroft, and for a much longer period, in the opinion of his contemporaries, 'He controlled the counsels of the country.' He had the courage to maintain that the Declaration of Independence was inopportune, and in the Convention which framed the constitution of the United States he took a leading part." Preface to "Life and Writings of John Dickinson," Vol. I, of "Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania," vol. XIII, Phila., 1891.

Our worthy forefathers—let's give them a cheer—
To climates unknown did courageously steer;
Thro' oceans to deserts, for freedom they came,
And, dying, bequeath'd us their freedom and fame.

Their generous bosoms all dangers despis'd,
So highly, so wisely, their birthrights they priz'd;
We'll keep what they gave, we will piously keep,
Nor frustrate their toils on the land or the deep.

The tree, their own hands had to Liberty rear'd,
They lived to behold growing strong and rever'd;
With transport then cried,—"Now our wishes we gain,
For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain."

How sweet are the labors that freemen endure,
That they shall enjoy all the profit, secure,—
No more such sweet labors Americans know,
If Britons shall reap what Americans sow.

Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
In so righteous a cause let us hope to succeed,
For Heaven approves of each generous deed.

All ages shall speak with amaze and applause,
Of the courage we'll show in support of our laws;
To die we can bear,—but to serve we disdain,
For shame is to freemen more dreadful than pain.

This bumper I crown for our sovereign's health,
And this for Britannia's glory and wealth;
That wealth and that glory immortal may be,
If she is but just, and we are but free.

In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live;
Our purses are ready,
Steady, Friends, steady,
Not as *slaves*, but as *freemen* our money we'll give.[1]

1. Winsor in his "Narrative and Critical History," vol. 6, p. 86, gives the music to which this "Liberty Song" was sung. It

The growing division of feeling may be noted in the parodies that were often returned to such verse as the foregoing in the newspapers with Tory leaning. Not too great stress, of course, should be laid upon these outpourings though they are none the less significant of tendencies and are of interest and worth when viewed in the light of future events. A line like the following:

For in freedom we'll live, or like heroes we'll die,[1]

is not lightly to be passed over.

In this connection it may be well to note an excerpt from a sermon delivered by the Bishop of St. Asaph's and reported in Rivington's "New York Gazette."[2] After remarking upon the conservative silence of the lord bishops on the great question at issue between the colonies and England, Dr. Shipley utters this prophecy: "Even in that future state of independence, which some amongst them ignorantly wish for, but which for their true interest can never be too long delayed; the old and prudent will often look back on their present happiness with regret; and consider the peace and security, the state of visible improvement, and brotherly equality which they enjoyed under the protection of their mother-country, as the

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is there stated that Dickinson was "assisted by Dr. Arthur Lee," that the poem was printed first in the "Pennsylvania Chronicle," of July 4, 1768, and that "sung to the tune of "Hearts of Oak," it "was made conspicuous in Boston by being sung at Liberty Hall and the Greyhound Tavern in August, 1768." Winsor cites the remark in Edes and Gill's "Almanac" (in which the verse was reprinted in 1770) to the effect that it was "now much in vogue in North America." See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 36-40.

1. In parody to Dickinson's poem of 1768.
2. September 15, 1774.

true golden age of America."

Not only were the men of the period filled with patriotic fervor and determined in their opposition to what they deemed oppression and tyranny but the women as well were ardent in the cause. Self-sacrifice on the part of the one was met and shared by the other. Through the spoken and the written word were many requests seeking to enlist the sympathies of all women,—mothers, sisters, wives and wives-to-be,—in effectually resisting the attempts at taxation by giving up the use of cloth other than that of American weaving. And such a boycott was abundantly fruitful; it was practical and almost immediate in its results. Later on,[1] we shall see again how much the women of the Revolution went through in their heroic efforts to aid a cause that they, too, felt was just. Not infrequently did verse laud them and with the usual grandiloquence commend them for their patriotism and their zeal.

1. See pp. 171, ff.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY SEVENTIES

Philip Freneau—"the poet of the Revolution"—his influence—his life and early work—the colonial college and its spirit—Freneau's later years—"The Rising Glory of America"—Trumbull's "The Prospect"—The trouble over tea—two poems—The Boston Port Act—its effect—Loyalist verse—The first Continental Congress—Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson—"A Summary View"—Rev. Samuel Seabury and his "farmer's letters"—Lexington and Concord—The second Continental Congress, May, 1775.

THROUGHOUT the years of strife one poet in particular was exceedingly prolific. From all accounts, his work was widely popular and was read and enjoyed in even the remoter sections of the colonies. No pen could have been better appreciated than Philip Freneau's during the entire struggle for independence first, and afterwards during the formative years of our national life. Nor was ever pen more untiring in a cause espoused. Few, if any, of his earlier poems are memorable, however, nor do they approach in quality, even remotely, certain of their author's later work.

Philip Morin Freneau, of Huguenot forebears, was born in New York City in 1752. He was fortunate enough to take his college course at Princeton, the "College

of New Jersey," as it was then called, while James Madison, future President of the United States, was in attendance there, and during the notable administration of John Witherspoon, a prince among men, a man marked in his generation, one of light and leading not alone in academic affairs but in other and varied activities of a useful and well-directed life. A clergyman of commanding eloquence, Witherspoon was not only a college president but a statesman—a member of the Continental Congress and a signer of the Declaration of Independence as well. Under such influence and such a presence, college days grew to be stirring days, witnessing at times passionate outbreaks reflective of the state of the larger society beyond the campus. "The shadow of the coming struggle with Great Britain was already lengthening over the colonies and nowhere was its presence more manifest than in the colleges, always the most sensitive areas in times of tyranny and oppression.[1] On August 6, 1770, the senior class at Princeton voted unanimously to appear at commencement dressed in American manufactures."[2] Philosophic turmoil rather than philosophic calm seems to have been increasingly pervasive. At Commencement, 1771, a poem, "The Rising Glory of America," joint work of two students, was recited by Hugh Henry Brackenridge[3] though "it was surely Freneau who conceived the

1. At William and Mary College of Virginia, founded 1694, it is said that "At the outbreak of the struggle for independence there were seventy students. Thirty-seven of them left college and joined the continental army. Three professors also took arms for their country's cause." H. B. Adams: "The College of William and Mary." Bureau of Education: Circular of Information, No. 1, 1887.
2. Pattee: I, p. XVI.
3. See p. 62.

work and who gave it its strength and high literary value."[1]

From the appeal to arms onward, Freneau published poetic broadsides in quick succession now aimed at the King, now at Parliament, again at British general or American loyalist—all his work surcharged with high emotion, relentless in spirit and bitterly vituperative. Before he was thirty, Freneau took to the sea and mastered several ships to the West Indies and beyond. It was in 1780 that, while sailing south as a passenger, he was taken by the British and returned to New York with others to experience the torture and horror of a prison-ship and later the languid atmosphere of an infected hospital-ship lying off-shore in the East River. His vivid description of the days and nights which poor wretches spent in these rotten hulks will be discussed later.[2]

Freneau's life following the Peace of Paris does not properly concern us but for completeness' sake it may be briefly told. His was a long life-span—eighty years—spent in work varied in nature and earnest always. In post-bellum days he was editor of successive newspapers. His service in the state department under the first Secretary of State and in the interest of the rising Jeffersonian party has not been forgotten by historians of our political history though no comment thereon is necessary here. His fame, let it suffice to say, had been in eclipse for nearly a generation before his death in 1832.

"The Rising Glory of America," the work mentioned above, speaks volumes as to its character; and grandilo-

1. Pattee: I, p. XXI. May we not question "high"?
2. Pp. 181, ff.

quent, excessively strained at times and formal, though truly elevated in places are adjectives which fitly complete what the title fails to convey. It is a commencement piece with all the defect and merit of its kind. Yet, one is tempted to condone its deficiencies with the thought that, after all, as the writer heard Henry Van Dyke remark in a baccalaureate address, commencement-day enthusiasm and the lofty ideals of youth are to be prized more highly than the too frequent pessimism exhibited by those grown older in years and presumably in wisdom.

The poem (in its revised form) runs through nearly five hundred lines and is made up of observations vouchsafed by three characters,—Acasto, Leander, Eugenio. The Indians, the early discoverers, explorers and settlers, colonial wars, distinguished heroes like Wolfe and Braddock, the superiority of North over South America, together with commerce, agriculture, science, religion,—all come in for appropriate phrases to be concluded with a picture of the present glory of the young republic and a vision of that which is to be. A few quotations will suggest the general spirit of the whole work.

Leander opens the conversation with:

> No more of Memphis and her mighty kings,
> Of Alexandria, where the Ptolomies
> Taught golden commerce to unfurl her sails,
> And bid fair science smile: No more of Greece
> Where learning next her early visit paid,
> And spread her glories to illume the world;
> No more of Athens, where she flourished,
> And saw her sons of mighty genius rise,
> Smooth flowing Plato, Socrates and him
> Who with resistless eloquence reviv'd

The spirit of Liberty, and shook the thrones
Of Macedon and Persia's haughty king.
No more of Rome, enlighten'd by her beams,
Fresh kindling there the fire and eloquence,
And poesy divine; imperial Rome!
Whose wide dominion reach'd o'er half the globe;
Whose eagle flew o'er Ganges to the East
And in the West far to the British Isles.
No more of Britain and her kings renown'd,
Edward's and Henry's thunderbolts of war;
Her chiefs victorious o'er the Gallic foe;
Illustrious senators, immortal bards,
And wise philosophers, of these no more.
A Theme more new, tho' not less noble, claims
Our ev'ry thought on this auspicious day;
The rising glory of this western world,
Where now the dawning light of science spreads
Her orient ray, and wakes the muse's song;
Where freedom holds her sacred standard high,
And commerce rolls her golden tides profuse
Of elegance and ev'ry joy of life.

Acasto and Eugenio recount the glories of the period of discovery and exploration from Columbus down. After a time Eugenio waxes eloquent:

'Tis true no human eye can penetrate
The veil obscure, and in fair light disclos'd
Behold the scenes of dark futurity;
Yet if we reason from the course of things,
And downward trace the vestiges of time,
The mind prophetic grows and pierces far
Thro' ages yet unborn. We saw the states
In swift succession from the Assyrian
To Macedon and Rome; to Britain thence
Dominion drove her car, she stretch'd her reign
O'er many isles, wide seas, and peopled lands.

Now in the west a continent appears;
The sons of Boston, resolute and brave,
The firm supporters of our injur'd rights,
Shall lose their splendours in the brighter beams
Of patriots fanci'd and heroes yet unborn.

Then the poem soars on wings of characteristic biblical figure:

And when a train of rolling years are past,
(So sang the exil'd seer in Patmos isle)
A new Jersusalem sent down from heav'n
Shall grace our happy earth, perhaps this land,
Whose ample bosom shall receive, though late,
Myriads of saints, with their immortal king,
To live and reign on earth a thousand years,
Thence called Millennium. Paradise anew
Shall flourish, by no second Adam lost,
No dangerous tree with deadly fruit shall grow,
No tempting serpent to allure the soul—
From native innocence.—A Canaan here,
Another Canaan shall excel the old,
And from a fairer Pisgah's top be seen.
No thistle here, nor thorn, nor briar shall spring,
Earth's curse before: the lion and the lamb
In natural friendship linked, shall browse the shrub,
And timorous deer with softened tygers stray
O'er mead, or lofty hill, or grassy plain.

And again:

This is thy praise, America, thy Pow'r,
Thou best of climes, by science visited,
By freedom blest and richly stored with all,
A newer world now opens to her view,
She hastens onward to th' Americ shores
And bids a scene of recent wonders rise.

New states, new empires and a line of kings,
High rais'd in glory, cities, palaces,
Fair domes on each long bay, sea, shore or stream,
Circling the hills now rear their lofty heads.

The glories of America's native beauty are then reviewed and compared with scenes in other and in earlier lands:

Far in the south I see a Babylon
As once by Tigris or Euphrates stream,
With blazing tow'rs and observatories
Rising to heav'n; from thence astronomers
With optic glass take nobler views of God
In golden suns and shining worlds display'd
Than the poor Chaldean with the naked eye.

. . . . . .

Hoarse Niagara's stream now roaring on
Thro' woods and rocks and broken mountains torn,
In days remote far from their ancient beds,
By some great monarch taught a better course,
Or cleared of cataracts shall flow beneath
Unnumbr'd boats and merchandise and men.

Leander speaks:

And here fair freedom shall forever reign,
I see a train, a glorious train appear,
Of Patriots plac'd in equal fame with those
Who nobly fell for Athens or for Rome.
The luxuries of life. Hail, happy land,
The seat of empire, the abode of kings,
The final stage where time shall introduce
Renowned characters, and glorious works
Of high invention and of wondrous art.

And once more:

. . . . I see, I see
Freedom's established reign; cities, and men,
Numerous as sands upon the ocean shore,
And empires rising where the sun descends!—
The Ohio soon shall glide by many a town
Of note; and where the Mississippi stream,
By forests shaded, now runs weeping on,
Nations shall grow, and states not less to fame
Than Greece and Rome of old!—we, too, shall boast
Our Scipios, Solons, Catos, sages, chiefs
That in the lap of time yet dormant lie,
Waiting the joyous hour of life and light.—

Another work of about the same time is also worthy of comment and quotation here. "The Prospect of the Future Glory of America"[1] by John Trumbull,[2] a young Yale man, is a rather careful piece of verse of "the vision type" and is, the author states, "the conclusion of an Oration, delivered at the public commencement at Yale College, September 12, 1770." America, as youthful patriotism pierces the veil and beholds her, is depicted in future glorious guise, not in her military and naval and commercial splendor only, but in her triumphs in the arts as well. She shall be, indeed:

The first in letters, as the first in arms,

Her bards shall—

Ope heaven's glories to th' astonished eye,
And bid their lays with lofty Milton vie;

1. "Poetical Works," Hartford, 1820; II, 159.
2. See pp. 83, ff.

Or wake from nature's themes the moral song,
And shine with Pope, with Thompson and with Young.[1]

Again:

This land her Swift and Addison shall view,
The former honours equall'd by the new;
Here shall some Shakespear charm the rising age,
And hold in magic chains the listening stage;
A second Watts shall string the heavenly lyre,
And other muses other bards inspire.

No event of the earlier years of the revolutionary era seems to have served better to inspire the patriot muse than the famous "tea-party" of Boston in December, 1773. The action of Parliament in taxing tea was fraught with consequences at once disastrous and humorous. Much verse appeared in print to be spread broadcast throughout the colonies. A single poem,[2] consisting of eight quatrains, will bespeak the feelings of the inhabitants of Boston on the arrival of the three tea-ships in their harbor. It is worth quoting in full:

As near beauteous Boston lying,
  On the gently swelling flood
Without jack or pennant flying,
  Three ill-fated tea-ships rode;

Just as glorious Sol was setting,
  On the wharf a numerous crew,
Sons of Freedom, fear forgetting,
  Suddenly appear'd in view.

1. See p. 27, above.
2. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 56-8; quoted from "The Pennsylvania Packet," 1774.

Arm'd with hammers, axes, chisels,
Weapons new for warlike deed,
Tow'rd the tax'd-tea-freighted vessels,
They came boldly and with speed.

O'er their heads in lofty mid-day,
Three bright angel forms were seen,
This was Hampden, that was Sidney,
With fair Liberty between.

"Soon," they cried, "your foes you'll banish,
Soon the triumph will be won,
Scarce the setting sun shall vanish
Ere the glorious deed is done!"

Quick as thought the ships were boarded,
Hatches burst and chests display'd;
Axes, hammers, help afforded,
What a crash that eve was made!

Deep into the sea descended
Cursed weed of China's coast;
Thus at once our fears were ended!
British rights shall ne'er be lost!

Captains! once more hoist your streamers,
Spread your sails and plough the wave;
Tell your masters they were dreamers
When they thought to cheat the brave.

Another poem entitled, "Virginia Banishing Tea,"[1] written in 1774 by a patriot Virginia woman whose name has not come down to us, will serve as a companion piece. We note the personal attack, the historical touch and the strained emotion familiar enough in the verse of later years.

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 59-61.

Begone, pernicious, baneful tea,
With all Pandora's ills possessed,
Hyson, no more beguiled by thee
My noble sons shall be oppressed.

To Britain fly, where gold enslaves,
And venal men their birthright sell;
Tell *North* and his bribed clan of knaves,
Their bloody acts were made in hell.

In Henry's reign those acts began,
Which sacred rules of justice broke
North now pursues the hellish plan,
To fix on us his slavish yoke.

But we oppose and will be free,
This great good cause we will defend;
Nor bribe, nor Gage, nor North's decree,
Shall make us "at his feet to bend."

From Anglia's ancient sons we came;
Those heroes who for freedom fought;
In freedom's cause we'll march; their fame,
By their example greatly taught.

Our king we love, but North we hate,
Nor will to him submission own;
If death's our doom, we'll brave our fate,
But pay allegiance to the throne.

Then rouse, my sons! from slavery free
Your suffering homes; from God's high wrath;
Gird on your steel; give *liberty*
To all who follow in our path.

Determined now to put its power to the test and by lessons severe and ill-advised to teach the people of Amer-

ica and of Massachusetts in particular where the seat of authority and dominion still remained, Parliament enacted, with other measures, the Boston Port Bill, in 1774, closing the custom house at Boston and removing it to Salem. The intent, so evidently to crush the rising revolt by shutting off all commercial enterprise in the centre of disaffection, hardly hit the mark. Sympathy for Massachusetts became manifest and asserted itself on every side. The law proved a blessing in disguise. The spirit of union was quickened as it had not been before, animosities nursed from petty causes and ancient jealousies grew less through the sullen feeling of common and bitter resentment.

Still, Boston's plight, her ruined trade and uncertain future, must have told heavily upon the hearts of her sons. Trumbull portrays the conditions in a long poem, "An Elegy on the Times"—sixty quatrains and more in length, "composed at Boston during the operation of the Port Bill, August, 1774." It is vivid enough in its portrayal of the city of yesterday and that of to-day. But it is far from being wholly despairing, holding out hope, indeed, to the people, stricken and depressed as they are, and discerning beyond their day of discomfiture, the desolation of the isle of Britain where:

> On her white cliff, the pillars once of fame,
> Her melancholy Genius sits to wail,
> Drops the fond tear, and o'er her latest shame,
> Bids dark Oblivion draw th' eternal veil.

To set off against such verse as the above by patriot pens let us cite a rather brilliant play upon the original

intent of the motto, "Unite or Die," depicted at the head of some American newspapers of the day, which, accompanied by the figure of a snake cut into several pieces with the initials "N. E." (New England) on the head, came out in Rivington's loyal "New York Gazette," August 25, 1774. Here it is:

Ye Sons of Sedition, how comes it to pass
That America's typ'd by a Snake—in the grass?
Don't you think 'tis a scandalous, saucy reflection,
That merits the soundest, severest correction?
New-England's the Head, too;—New-England's abus'd;
For the Head of the Serpent we know should be bruis'd!

In September, 1774, delegates assembled at Philadelphia from several of the colonies to discuss the issues and the situation that had arisen and to devise, if possible, some means whereby the whole controversy might be satisfactorily settled. This meeting, the first of the continental congresses, and an outgrowth of the idea of committees of correspondence in the several colonies, did little beyond drawing up a petition to the home government and setting a date, May 10th of the following year, for another assembling of colonial representatives. But there were several significant sentences spoken at that first congress when Patrick Henry of Virginia arose and, as John Adams made record, exclaimed: "Government is dissolved. Fleets and armies and the present state of things show that government is dissolved. The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian,

but an American!"[1] Had there been little other than mere oratory displayed in Carpenters' Hall, the congress assembled there might have passed into history less memorably than it did. But sober men were among the delegates, political thinkers and dreamers, too. Others with able minds were unable to be present. One of these, Thomas Jefferson, sent a paper entitled, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America. Set Forth in some Resolutions intended for the Inspection of the present Delegates of the People of Virginia now in convention."[2] An able state paper was this, setting forth in historical parallel the relationship, as Jefferson saw it, which subsisted between the colonies and the mother-land oversea—a paper comparable to a degree with the more famous Declaration itself, less than two years later.

There were not wanting, however, many who took issue with the deliberators at Philadelphia, even to doubting the high quality of the intelligence they displayed. A pamphlet, issued in 1774, "By a Farmer," essayed to vent Tory views in some "Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress, Held at Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1774, wherein their Errors are exhibited, Their Reasonings Confuted, and the fatal Tendency of their Non-Importation, Non-Exportation, and Non-Consumption Measures are laid open to the plainest Understandings and

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1. "Works of John Adams," ed. by Charles F. Adams, Boston, 1850; II, 365-402, passim; quoted also by Professor Hart in "American History Told by Contemporaries;" II, 434. An interesting and vivid account of the sessions of the first Continental Congress as the future second President of the United States witnessed them.

2. See "Writings of Thomas Jefferson," ed. by Ford.

The Only Means pointed out For Preserving and Securing our Present Happy Constitution . . ." The pamphlet was addressed "to the Farmers, and Other Inhabitants of North America, In General, and to those of the Province of New York In Particular" and it bore on its title page the vigorous words: "Hear Me, for I *Will* Speak!" The "farmer" came generally to be understood to be the Rev. Samuel Seabury[1] of Connecticut, a loyalist clergyman who suffered much to hold true to his allegiance and who proved a keen and forceful protagonist in the wordy warfare of the times. Our purpose in the present study will not permit further detail as to the contents of the work of this aggressive divine; the title as given above must suffice, though a careful consideration of its argument would reveal the fact that the loyalist's thought was by no means wanting in weight and certainly no less earnest and sincere than that of the delegates upon resistance to their King determined.

When the date set for the reconvening of the congress drew near petitions and speech-making seemed no longer to be availing, but action deliberate and firm, the single course to be pursued. At this second assembling in May, 1775, therefore, events having moved so rapidly, it was voted that an army be raised and that its command be entrusted to George Washington of Virginia. A month before the first sessions the British troopers stationed at Boston had been ordered to Concord to destroy the rebel stores and to seize the two leaders, John Hancock and Samuel Adams. At Lexington an encounter had taken

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1. Later, first bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. See p. 88.

place, shots had been exchanged and American blood had been shed. At Concord bridge stubborn resistance had been met with and, while the soldiers of Britain had been able with difficulty to accomplish part of their appointed task,—destroying stores but not capturing the leaders—they returned a disappointed band, their loss in men considerable, their confidence in their strength somewhat dimmed. In a word, when the second Continental Congress convened at Philadelphia, Lexington and Concord had given the word—the war was on.

CHAPTER IV

THE CALL TO ARMS

Beginnings about Boston—Bunker Hill—H. H. Brackenridge—his life—his dramatic work on Bunker Hill—Warren, Lord Howe—Continued interest in Bunker Hill—Joel Barlow—"The Vision of Columbus"—the author's life and literary work—"The Hartford Wits"—the battle scene from "The Vision"—Thomas Paine's "Liberty Tree"—his life and influence—Freneau's "A Political Litany"—his "American Liberty"—Poem on the coming of British commanders—Freneau's "General Gage's Soliloquy"—his "The Midnight Consultations"—his "To the Americans" and "General Gage's Confession"—Expedition to Canada—Death of Montgomery—Ann Eliza Bleecker's poem thereon—Barlow's picture—"The Pennsylvania March" and "High on the Banks of Delaware."

THE conflict everyone knew must be carried on first about Boston, the feud centre in the years just past. Even before the commander-in-chief had taken over his heavy charge at Cambridge early in July, 1775, another battle on the seventeenth of the preceding month had occurred—the patriots at Bunker Hill had suffered their great repulse but had learned through bitter experience with a determined foe the priceless lesson which defeat can teach, and had received the benefit of the discipline born of failure.

"At the time of the battle of Bunker's Hill," writes Hugh Henry Brackenridge,[1] "I was master of an Academy on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and wrote the following for an exercise to be performed by the youth of the Seminary, and which was shortly after published." Brackenridge's work is in the dramatic form and after the familiar manner of many another of its time. It consists of five acts, partly in prose though for the most part in heroic verse, and essays the portrayal of the feelings of the leaders and the men in the ranks on either side during the memorable engagement. Warren and Putnam, Gage, Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne appear in the several scenes. We feel the pride of new-found strength in the April skirmishes of 1775, and the humiliation that must have lingered and rankled in the British bosom. Act II, Scene 3 presents a dialogue between militiamen in the American camp and is concerned with the cause leading to the call to arms. "It was not the sum of the tax, but the principle that induced us to resist. The tax on tea was but an entering wedge. Grant this and all follows. It is the beginning of usurpation that must be resisted."[2] There is not a little fiery speech running through it all. In the third act[3] we have a scene on the hill-top with Warren

1. See p. 46, above. Hugh Henry Brackenridge was a native of Scotland but early came to America, graduating at the College of New Jersey at Princeton in the class of 1771. His life was varied in occupation. At one period he was chaplain in the continental army; at another, editor of the "United States Magazine" at Philadelphia; again, we see him as a lawyer and later a Pennsylvania judge. He died in Philadelphia in 1816. Brackenridge was, of course, distinctly a minor bard whose work was yet effective in its purpose.

2. "Gazette Publications"; Carlisle, 1806; p. 289.

3. Ibid., Scene 3, p. 293.

stirring his men to action:

To arms, my countrymen, for see the foe
Comes forth to battle, and would seem to try
Once more,[1] their fortune in decisive war,
Three thousand, 'gainst seven hundred, rang'd this day,
Shall give the world an ample specimen,
What strength, and daring confidence, the sound
Of Liberty inspires. That Liberty,
Which, not the thunder of Bellona's voice,
With fleets, and armies, from the British Shore,
Shall wrest from us. Our noble ancestors
Out-brav'd the tempests of the hoary deep,
And on this hill, uncultivate, and wild,
Sought an asylum, from that despotic sway;
A short asylum, for that envious power,
With persecution dire, still follows us.
At first, they deem'd our charters forfeited,
Next, our just rights in government, abridg'd,
Then, thrust in viceroys, and bashaws, to rule,
With lawless sovereignty.

Then, in memory, the speaker takes his hearers back to the Common of Boston, to the "massacre," as history has termed it,—that street-riot occasioned by the firing of the king's troops upon the not too peaceable citizenry:

Much have we suffered from the licens'd rage
Of brutal soldiery, in each fair town,
The 5th of March, brave countrymen, that day
When Boston's streets ran blood, remember
And let the memory, to revenge, stir up
The temper of your souls.

He closes:

1. Referring evidently to the previous engagements at Lexington and Concord.

Let every arm
This day be active, in fair freedom's cause,
And shower down, from the hill, like Heaven in wrath,
Full store of lightning, and fierce iron hail,
To blast the adversary. Let this ascent,
Like burning Aetna or Vesuvius top,
Be wrapt in flame—The word is LIBERTY,
And Heaven smile on us, in so just a cause.

Warren, fighting bravely, falls in the second scene of the fourth act. This scene is not unworthy of full quotation even though it possesses, of course, as do the others, the quality that separates it from verse which we call great. The dying patriot speaks, "mortally wounded" as he is, and "falling on his right knee, covering his breast with his right hand, and supporting himself with his firelock in his left:"

A deadly ball hath limited my life,
And now to God, I offer up my soul.
But oh, my countrymen, let not the cause,
The sacred cause of liberty, with me
Faint or expire. By the last parting breath
And blood of this your fellow soldier slain,
Be now adjur'd never to yield the right,
The grand deposit of all-giving heaven,
To man's free nature.
Weep not for him who first espous'd the cause
And wishing life, have met the enemy
In fatal opposition. But rejoice,—
For now I go to mingle with the dead,
Great Brutus, Hampden, Sidney, and the rest,
Of old or modern memory, who liv'd,
A mound to tyrants, and strong hedge to kings;
Bounding the inundation of their rage;
Against the happiness and peace of man,

I see these heroes, where they walk serene,
By crystal currents, on the vale of Heaven,
High in full converse of immortal acts,
Achiev'd for truth and innocence on earth.

. . . . . .

Illustrious group! They beckon me along,
To ray my visage with immortal light,
And bind the amarinth around my brow.
I come, I come, ye first born of true fame;
Fight on, my countrymen, Be FREE, be FREE!

The final act makes vivid the last moments of the struggle for the possession of the hill-top, the British success and the rout of the Americans. Lord Pigot observes sadly:

The day is ours, but with heart-piercing loss,
Of soldiers slain, and gallant officers.
Old Abercrombie, on the field lies dead.
Pitcairn and Cherwin, in so battle slain.
The gallant reg'ment of Welsh fusileers,
To seventeen privates, is this day reduc'd.
The grenadiers stand, thinly on the hill,
Like the tall fir-trees on the blasted heath,
Scorch'd by the autumnal burnings, which have rush'd,
With wasting fire fierce through its leafy groves.

Then Lord Howe,[1] before the curtain falls:

Ev'n in an enemy I honour worth,
And valour eminent.
Should ev'ry hill by the rebellious foe,
So well defended, cost thus dear to us,
Not the united forces of the world
Could master them, and the proud rage subdue
Of these Americans!

1. Howe, says a recent writer, "though brave was torpid; probably he was not only torpid but half-hearted. As a member of parliament he had pledged himself to his constituents

The poets of the Revolution seemed unwilling to let die the echoes from Bunker Hill but remained to the end enthusiastic over the patriots' early defeat, rather proud withal of the splendid courage they displayed. In 1787 there appeared from the pen of Joel Barlow the fruit of years of patriotic thought and feeling in the poem entitled "The Vision of Columbus"—a long, cumbrous, formal work in nine cantos which the author some two decades later developed into a still more weighty volume, more ambitiously set forth under the title, "The Columbiad." Barlow with David Humphreys, Timothy Dwight and Lemuel Hopkins formed that little coterie of literary aspirants known to fame as "The Hartford Wits" who plied their vocation or rather avocation not wholly to waste purposes but who seemed to their contemporaries brighter with promise of enduring glory and honor than later generations of the country they served have deemed them worthy to receive. A graduate of Yale, Barlow late in the war turned to preaching, attaching himself and his eloquence to the American army and becoming intimate with the highest officers in the service, even Washington himself. Subsequently, the poet led a career of varied pursuits but chiefly, as Professor Tyler[1] has pointed out, in the polishing, expanding and publishing of his masterpiece, the child of his earlier and fondest literary fancy. "The Vision of Columbus" essays to present to the downcast and ill-used discoverer of America as he

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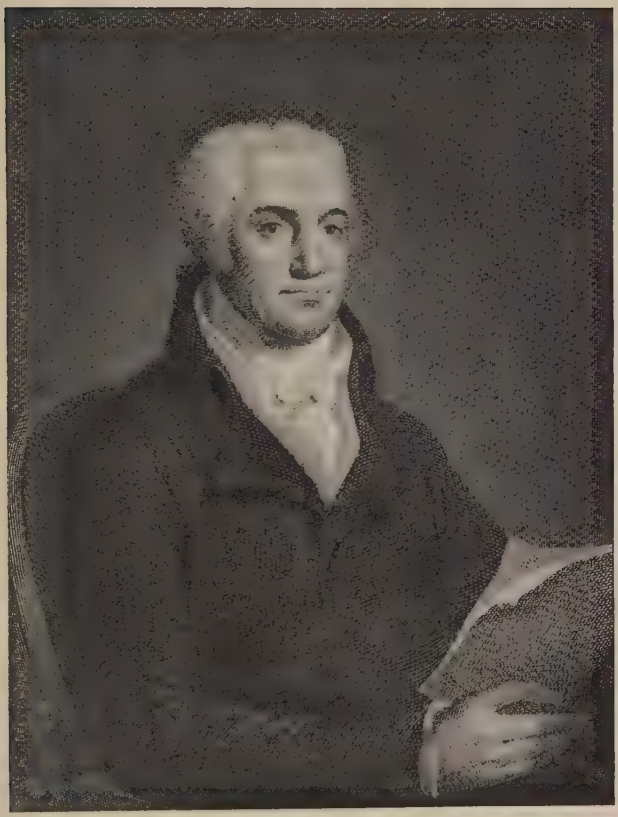
not to fight against the Americans, and he must have been fettered by that pledge." Goldwin Smith: "The United States: An Outline of Political History," 1492-1871: p. 85.

1. "Three Men of Letters," p. 40.



Joel Barlow

gazes from the Mount of Vision whither he has been led by the spirit of things as they will be, all the grandeur of coming years and the glory that shall beam upon the shores he has discovered and radiate therefrom to lands afar. Canto V is devoted to the vision of North America in particular. Earlier history having been revealed, Columbus peers through the smoke of flame and battle, as the poet tells us, to behold the scene on Bunker Hill:

Now, where the sheeted flames thro' Charlestown roar,
And lashing waves hiss round the burning shore,
Thro' the deep-folding fires, a neighbouring height
Thunders o'er all and seems a field of fight,
Like shadowy phantoms in an evening grove,
To the dark strife the closing squadrons wave;
They join, they break, they thicken thro' the air,
And blazing batteries burst along the war;
Now, wrapp'd in reddening smoke, now dim in sight,
They sweep the hill or wing the downward flight;
Here, wheel'd and wedg'd, whole ranks together turn,
And the long lightnings from their pieces burn;
There scattering flashes light the scanty train,
And broken squadrons tread the moving plain,
Britons in fresh battalions rise the height,
And, with increasing vollies, give the fight.
Till, smear'd with clouds of dust, and bath'd in gore,
As growing foes their raised artillery pour,
Columbia's hosts move o'er the fields afar,
And save, by slow retreat, the sad remains of war.
There strides bold Putnam, and from all the plains
Calls the tired host, the tardy rear sustains,
And, mid the whizzing deaths that fill the air,
Waves back his sword and dares the following war.
Through falling fires, Columbus sees remain
Half of each host in heaps promiscuous slain;

While dying crowds the lingering life-blood pour,
And slippery steeps are trod with prints of gore.
There, hapless Warren! thy cold earth was seen,
There spring thy laurels in immortal green;
Dearest of Chiefs, that ever press'd the plain,
In Freedom's cause, with early honours, slain,
Still dear in death, as when in fight you moved,
By hosts applauded, and by Heaven approved;
The faithful Muse shall tell the world thy fame,
And unborn realms resound the immortal name.

There appeared in the "Pennsylvania Magazine," in July, 1775, a rather smooth and even poem by Thomas Paine, entitled "Liberty Tree," and running through four eight-line stanzas. It is somewhat above the average verse of its day and merits quotation in full for its own sake not less than for the interest associated with the name of its author.

In a chariot of light from the regions of day,
The Goddess of Liberty came;
Ten thousand celestials directed the way,
And hither conducted the dame.
A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where the millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of his love,
And the plant she named *Liberty Tree*.

The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourish'd and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around,
To seek out his peaceable shore.
Unmindful of names or distinctions they came,
For freemen like brothers agree;
With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was *Liberty Tree*.

Beneath this fair tree, like the patriarchs of old,
  Their bread in contentment they ate
Unvex'd with the troubles of silver and gold,
  The cares of the grand and the great.
With timber and tar they Old England supply'd,
  And supported her pow'r on the sea;
Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
  For the honor of *Liberty Tree.*

But hear, O ye swains, 'tis a tale most profane,
  How all the tyrannical powers,
Kings, Commons and Lords, are uniting amain,
  To cut down this guardian of ours,
From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms,
  Thro' the land let the sound of it flee,
Let the far and the near, all unite with a cheer,
  In defense of our *Liberty Tree.*

The author of "Liberty Tree" was a native of England who, as a young man, emigrated to America in 1774 and almost immediately attracted attention far and wide by his throwing himself into the thick of the great debate, contributing in pamphlet and newspaper article not a little to the zeal of the patriot forces and anticipating much of the future course of events. In March, 1775, Paine's essay against slavery was issued in the "Pennsylvania Journal" at Philadelphia. It is a scathing criticism of an institution the establishment and development of which the countrymen of his adopted land were only too sorely to regret. Paine's series of essays on "The American Crisis"[1] became famous throughout the colonies, their vivid and emotional qualities commending them to the

1. See "Writings of Thomas Paine," ed. by M. D. Conway, I, 170-380.

heart no less than to the mind of many. In January, 1776, Paine set forth with cogent plainness his reasons for believing in the ultimate separation from England, in his "Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs."[1] Congress appointed him secretary to its committee on foreign affairs the following year and he continued his writing no less vigorously. Subsequent to the revolution in America, Paine went abroad seeking to aid the French in their later troublous times, suffering imprisonment and just escaping death itself. Returning to America, Paine settled at New Rochelle, New York, and there died in 1809. A monument, recently erected, marks his last home.

But to return to "the poet of the Revolution," Philip Freneau. "The Rising Glory of America," cited above, does not furnish the full galaxy of his qualities. Though we have here displayed his proneness to classical and biblical allusion and metaphor, we miss the bitterness, the vituperative outburst, the fierce, uncontrolled invective, the keen satire for which he stands in our literary annals with few equals and no superiors. His patriotism will remain unquestioned but we can hardly fully sympathize with his excess in its expression. His rancor against the king and the British ministry was particularly deep and ineradicable as witness these lines of "A Political Litany,"[2] of August, 1775, written after the manner of the petitions in the litany of "The Book of Common Prayer."

Libera Nos, Domine—Deliver us, O Lord, not only from British dependence, but also

1. "Writings," pp. 84-101. See pp. 109-110, below.
2. "Poems," I, 139-141.

From a junto that labor with absolute power,
Whose schemes disappointed have made them look sour,
From the lords of the council, who fight against freedom,
Who still follow on where the devil shall lead them.

From the group at St. James's, who slight our petitions,
And fools that are writing for further submission—
From a nation whose manners are rough and severe,
From scoundrels and rascals,—do keep us all clear.

From pirates sent out by command of the king
To murder and plunder, but never to swing.
From Wallace and Greaves, and Vipers and Roses,
Whom, if heaven pleases, we'll give bloody noses.

From the valliant Dunmore, with his crew of banditti,
Who plunder Virginians at Williamsburg city,
From hot-headed Montague, mighty to swear,
The little fat man with his pretty white hair.

From bishops in Britain, who butchers are grown,
From slaves that would die for a smile from the throne,
From assemblies that vote against congress proceedings,
(Who now see the fruit of their stupid misleadings.)

From Tryon[1] the mighty, who flies from our city,
And swelled with importance disdains the committee:
(But since he is pleased to proclaim us his foes,
What the devil care we where the devil he goes.)

From the caitiff, Lord North, who would bind us in chains,
From a royal king Log, with his tooth-full of brains,
Who dreams, and is certain (when taking a nap)
He has conquered our lands, as they lay on his map.

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1. "No one else in King George's employment, from first to last, did so much injury to the cause of the master whom he served." Trevelyan: "The American Revolution," II, 240.

From a kingdom that bullies and hectors, and swears,
We send up to heaven our wishes and prayers,
That we, disunited, may freemen be still,
And Britain go on—to be damned if she will.

In this poem we note Freneau's intimate knowledge of the incidents taking place far and near, on the seas as well as on the land, even to the names, the doings and personal characteristics of British commanders and royal governors like Montague and Dunmore and Tryon whose depredations were particularly harassing or were threatening the peace of the inhabitants from New England to Georgia.

Freneau's "American Liberty, A Poem,"[1] three hundred heroic couplets in length, was published about the middle of the year 1775 and exhibits, on the whole, some strength although in feeling it is strained and in style as usual grandiloquent. Of the Tories he writes:

Tories or traitors, call them what you choose,
Tories are rogues, and traitors imps broke loose.

And of others:

What moonstruck madness seized the brains of Gage?
Laughs not the soul, when an imprison'd few
Affect to pardon those they can't subdue?

He becomes reckless and extreme:

Too obstinately will'd to bow his ear
To groaning thousands or petitions hear,
Dare breaks all oaths that bind the just like fate,
Oaths, that th' Arch-Devil would blush to violate,

1. "Poems"; I, 150.

And foe to truth, both oaths and honour sell,
To establish principles, the growth of hell—

Yet Freneau rises in tone occasionally:

O Congress fam'd, accept this humble lay,
The little tribute that the muse can pay;
On you depends Columbia's future fate,
A free asylum or a wretched state.
Fall'n on disastrous times we push our plea,
Heard or not heard, and struggle to be free;
Born to contend, our lives we place at stake,
And grow immortal by the stand we make.

See Washington New Albion's freedom owns,
And moves to war with half Virginia's sons;
Bold in the fight, whose actions might have aw'd
A Roman Hero or a Grecian God.

The poet pleads for immigration:

O you, who, far from liberty detained,
Wear out existence in some slavish land,
Fly thence from tyrants, and their flatt'ring throng,
And bring the fiery freeborn soul along.

Let us close our quotations with a few lines which speak for themselves from near the beginning of the poem:

Kind watchful power, on whose supreme command
The fate of monarchs, empires, worlds depend,
Grant, in a cause thy wisdom must approve,
Undaunted valour kindled from above;
Let not our souls descend to dastard fear,
Be valour, prudence both united here;
Now as of old thy mighty arm display;
Relieve the opprest, and saving power convey.

The British commanders sent to our shores seem to have

been made the subject of many a poetic outburst. Their very coming was noted. In a poem,[1] "On the storm of thunder and lightning . . . the day[2] the generals embarked for America," we read:

The Chiefs embark, and clouds involve the skies,
Storms sweep the seas, and blusterous winds arise;
The Heav'ns themselves, red with uncommon ire,
Their thunders hurl, and slash indignant fire.
Oh thou! who rules the earth, and guides the flood,
Have mercy on the innocent and good.
Oh! spare the land, and let thy vengeance fall
On those who dare whole nations to enthral;
Send thy own thunders on the guilty head,
And, to appease thy wrath, strike the vile traitors dead.
But, Oh! restrain the hand of civil war,
And let thy favoured nations cease to jar;
Establish firm the Americans' rights and laws,
And may this land resound with their applause:
Then shall our vows in all thy temples rise;
And praise ascend in incense to the skies.

Of all the commanders of Britain General Gage could least complain of lack of attention on the part of the bards. Freneau in 1775 published several bitter attacks on the British military establishment in general and on Gage[3] in particular. One of these, "General Gage's soliloquy,"[4] suggests the futility of the whole military establishment and hints at the non-sympathetic attitude of

1. Dunlap's "Pennsylvania Packet," June 26, 1775; signed Hamden.
2. June 18th, 1775, as recorded in "Dunlap's."
3. See also Trumbull's allusions to Gen. Gage in "M'Fingal," pp. 87-8, below.
4. See "Poems": II, 152-57.

the general himself. Over one hundred lines, in heroic couplets, make up the poem which can be said to be hardly more than so many lines arranged after the similitude of real poetry.

The general soliloquizes half-heartedly on his mission, half-doubting its reason and its outcome. He muses:

As for myself—true—I was born to fight
As George commands, let him be wrong or right,
But did I swear, I ask my heart again,
To fight for Britons against Englishmen?
. . . . . .
As viceroy I, like modern monarchs, stay
Safe in the town—let others guide the fray.

He sees in vision a possible future:

Should gracious heaven befriend our troops and fleet,
And throw this vast dominion at my feet,
How would Britannia echo with my fame!
What endless honours would await my name!
In every province should the traveller see
Some trophy of my tedious victory—
Hard by the lakes my sovereign lord would grant
A rural empire to supply my want,
A manor would but poorly serve my turn,
The Lordship of a manor I would scorn!
An ample kingdom round Ontario's lake,
By heaven! should be the least reward I'd take,
There might I reign, unrivalled and alone,
An ocean and an empire of my own!

Toward the close he is made to speak of the futility of it all:

But hark the trumpet's clangor—hark—ah me!
What means this march of Washington and Lee?

When men like these such distant marches make,
It shows they think their freedom lies at stake:
When men like these defy my martial rule,
Good heaven! it is no time to play the fool—
Perhaps, they for their country's freedom rise;
North has, perhaps, deceived me with his lies.

And with these two couplets, the end:

Ye souls of fire, who burn for chief command,[1]
Come! take my place in this distracted land;
To wars like these I bid a long good-night—
Let North and George themselves such battles fight.

In thought, "The Midnight Consultations"[2] is closely similar and, like the other, is composed of heroic couplets, over one hundred and fifty in number. A traveler made invisible by a mantle furnished by the native Genius of North America visits General Gage's mansion in Boston, arriving at the time the Commander is holding council with his aides. Listening until the meeting breaks up, the visitor returns, his mantle removed, to the provincial camp where an American soldier is holding forth in a perfervid, patriotic speech in which he expresses the hope which many continued to entertain that reconciliation might yet be effected:

Long may Britannia rule our hearts again,
Rule as she ruled in George the Second's reign,
May ages hence her growing grandeur see,
And she be glorious—but ourselves as free!

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1. Gage's successor was Maj. Gen. Howe. See p. 65, ft., for note on Howe's attitude.
2. "Poems": I, 158-82.

A third effusion, "To the Americans,"[1] appeared in October of the same year and was occasioned by General Gage's proclamation that the provinces were in a state of rebellion and beyond the king's protection. It is in heroic couplets like the others but is much shorter, some forty-odd lines. It is marked by unrestrained speech, opprobrious epithets, and exemplifies Freneau's genius in the selection and the use of the word that wounds.

Rebels you are—the British champion cries—
Truth, stand thou forth!—and tell the wretch, He lies!—

Gage is called "base miscreant," "knave," and the following sentiment is expressed:

If to protest against a tyrant's laws,
And arm for vengeance in a righteous cause,
Be deemed Rebellion—'tis a harmless thing.

The fourth poem on Gage, entitled "General Gage's Confession,"[2] was written on the occasion of Gage's recall by the British ministry during the closing months of 1775 and expresses Freneau's idea of what the common disgust at home must have been with his ill-success and failure to crush the rebels. It is in heroic couplets and runs along for over one hundred and fifty lines in which the retiring commander unbosoms himself of his thoughts and feelings.

The year 1775 was marked by an unsuccessful but brilliant attempt on the part of the Americans to secure by

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1. "Poems": I, 185-87.
2. Ibid., I, 189-95.

force the control of America north of the St. Lawrence. Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery led an expedition to Canada, the former to be severely wounded, the latter to lose his life, and the whole campaign to end in failure, leaving as its chief result the memory of gallantry and courage of a high order.[1] We may catch a thrill of the glory even in defeat which seems to have attached to Montgomery's name from the following lines written some years later than the event. "The Elegy on the Death of General Montgomery"[2] is clearly indicative in form at least of the literary model of the period, and it exhibits not a little of the straining after effect so characteristic of its time and kind.

Melpomene, now strike a mournful string,
Montgomery's fate assisting me to sing!
Thou saw him fall upon the hostile plain
Yet ting'd with blood that gush'd from *Montcalm's* veins,
Where gallant *Wolfe* for conquest gave his breath,
Where num'rous heroes met the angel Death.
Ah! while the loud reiterated roar
Of cannon echoed on from shore to shore,
Benigner *Peace*, retiring to the shade,

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1. See Codmon: "Arnold's Expedition to Quebec." Also p. 173, below.

2. Bleecker, Ann Eliza; "Posthumous Works" of, N. Y., 1793; pp. 226-8. Mrs. Bleecker (1752-1783) though born in New York City spent her mature years in a little village north of Albany. Burgoyne's invasion obliged the Bleeckers to flee but they returned after Saratoga. It is not ungracious to record the words of another who remarks that her poems "have no very marked characteristics; they are occasionally sweet, generally mournful," but comments justly on the fact that they are worthy of note in that they were written in stirring times of personal peril and distress. See Caroline May's "Female Poets of America," p. 27.

Had gather'd laurel to adorn his head:
The laurel yet shall grace his bust; but, oh!
America must wear sad cypress now.
Dauntless he led her armies to the war,
Invulnerable was his soul to fear:
When they explor'd their way o'er trackless snows,
Where Life's warm tide thro' every channel froze,
His eloquence made the chill'd bosom glow,
And animated them to meet the foe:
Nor flam'd his bright conspicuous flame alone;
The softer virtues in his bosom shone;
It bled with every soldier's recent wound;
He rais'd the fallen vet'ran from the ground;
He wip'd the eye of grief, it ceas'd to flow;
His heart vibrated to each sound of woe;
His heart too good his country to betray
For splendid posts or mercenary pay,
Too great to see a virtuous land opprest,
Nor strive to have her injuries redress'd.

. . . . . .

'Tis not for him but for ourselves we grieve,
Like him to die is better than to live.

Joel Barlow seems to have been impressed, as were his contemporaries, with Montgomery's northern invasion. In his "Vision of Columbus,"[1] he depicts the matter as follows:

With his dread host, Montgomery issues forth,
And lights his passage thro' the dusky north;
O'er streams and lakes his conquering banners play,
Navies and forts, surrendering, mark his way;
Thro' desert wilds, o'er rocks and fens, they go,
And hills before them lose their crags in snow;

1. Pp. 157-8.

Unbounded toils they brave; when rise in sight
Quebec's dread walls, and Wolfe's still dreary height;
They climb the steep, he eyes the turrets round,
With piked hosts and dark artillery crown'd;
The daring onset points; and, high in air,
O'er rocky ramparts leads the dreadful war.

. . . . . .

Through the wide streets, collecting from afar,
The foes in shouting squadrons urged the War;
The smoke convolv'd, the thunders rock'd around,
And the brave hero prest the gory ground.

Before taking up the most considerable single work that appeared during this period it may be well to quote a poem or two of interest; and first, the three stanzas and choruses of an early war ballad which came out in the "Pennsylvania Packet," August 7, 1775. It is entitled, "The Pennsylvania March," and was evidently intended for camp-life, for we are told that it was set "To the Tune of the Scots Song, 'I winna Marry ony Lad, but Sandy o'er the Lee.'"

We are the troops that n'er did stoop
To wretched slavery.
Nor shall our seed, by our base deed,
Despised vassals be.
Freedom we will bequeath them,
Or we will bravely die;
Our greatest foe, ere long shall know
How much did Sandwich lie.

Chorus.

And all the world shall know,
Americans are free;
Nor slaves nor cowards will we prove,
Great Britain soon shall see.

We'll not give up our birthright,
  Our foes shall find us men:
As good as they in any shape,
  The British troops shall ken;
Huzza, brave boys, we'll beat them,
  On any hostile plain;
For freedom, wives, and children dear,
  The battle we'll maintain.

Chorus.

What? Can those British Tyrants think
  Our Fathers cross'd the main;
And savage foes, and danger met,
  To be enslav'd by them?
If so, they are mistaken,
  For we will rather die;
And since they have become our foes,
  Their forces we defy.

In October, 1775, was published in the same sheet as the above a rather careful, pleasing poem, fifteen quatrains in length, the quality of which will be apparent in the stanzas themselves without further comment:

High on the banks of Delaware,
  Fair Liberty she stood;
And waving with her lovely hand,
  Cry'd, "Still thou roaring flood.

"Be still ye winds, be still ye seas,
  "Let only zephyrs play;"
Just as she spoke—they all obey'd;
  And thus the maid did say:

"Welcome, my friends, from every land,
  "Where Freedom doth not reign;

"Oh! hither fly, from ev'ry clime,
"Sweet Liberty to gain."

O Genius of our ancient times!
Be thou our children's guide,
"To arms! to arms!" They call to arms,
And stalk in martial pride.

"I will them guide, ye rev'rend fires!
"Go to your tombs in peace;
"The rage of proud usurping men,
"Your sons shall yet repress.

"Hold up your heads—ye weeping fair!
"Their swords are on their thighs;
"Smile yet again—ye lovely babes!
"Their banner's in the skies.

"I come, I come, to join your train;
"Heaven's ministers I see;
"Farewell, my friends, be not afraid!
"Be virtuous and be free!"

Heav'n's portals open'd as she soar'd,
And angels thence did come,
With heav'nly songs, and golden harps,
The Goddess welcom'd home.

CHAPTER V

"M'FINGAL"

The three major poets of the Revolution differentiated —John Trumbull—his life—origin of "M'Fingal"—the work itself—Cantos I and II. The Town-Meeting—the debate between 'Squire M'Fingal and Honorius—Canto III—The Liberty Pole—the 'Squire's discomfiture —Canto IV—The Vision—the future patriot success revealed—Criticisms and general estimate of the work—its popularity—close of the period of controversy.

WITH Philip Freneau and Francis Hopkinson, Professor Tyler would name John Trumbull as worthy of special note among the patriot poets of the Revolution. Though hardly to the same degree all three betrayed in common that intensity of feeling toward king, ministry and parliament so marked throughout the period. Trumbull wrote several pieces in verse, patriotic and other, but whatever fame he merits will always be due him through his mock-epic, "M'Fingal." The poet was of a family distinguished in our history not only in public affairs but in the arts as well. A kinsman of his served conspicuously and with honor as governor of Connecticut during the war and another of his own name was one of our earlier painters and notable for several paintings of historical subjects now hanging on the walls of the rotunda of the national capitol.

John Trumbull, the poet, was a native of Connecticut,

born in April, 1750, and coming to manhood, therefore, during the trying days of controversy which we have been considering. Having been educated at Yale and having served as tutor at the same college, Trumbull studied law and was admitted to the bar, entering in 1773 the law office of John Adams, later a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the second President of the United States. The poet's early years were thus spent amid associations of both family and professional life which could but tend to instil within him at its source the fervor of the nascent patriotism of a new allegiance.

Trumbull's interest in the welfare of the state did not cease with the close of the war. During the uncertain days following the laying down of arms, he bent his energy to soothing the spirits of his countrymen, ruffled as those spirits were at times in the aftermath of the great conflict. He continued in public life for years as a legislator in his native commonwealth and as a judge thereof. Length of days was granted Judge Trumbull for he lived to see his country pass through several trying decades of its national life to the beginning of the epoch of internal struggle and self-consciousness of Jackson's day.

"M'Fingal," its author's masterpiece, was foreshadowed in a piece of verse which appeared in the "Connecticut Courant" and in which a proclamation by General Gage was burlesqued. "The *Proclamation Versified* was published, . . . in August, 1775. So large a portion of it is re-produced in the first three cantos of *M'Fingal,* that the latter poem may be said to have grown directly out of the former. That it was the appearance of this burlesque which induced the author's friends to urge him to

the composition of a longer and regularly constructed poem, in the same measure and a similar vein, is hardly doubtful."[1]

Trumbull himself tells us in the edition of his works that appeared in 1820,[2] that "M'Fingal" was written "merely with a political view," and "at the instigation of some leading members of the first Congress, who urged me to compose a satirical poem on the events of the campaign in the year, 1775. My design was to give, in a poetical manner, a general account of the American contest, with a particular description of the characters and manners of the times, interspersed with anecdotes which no history would probably record or display and, with as much impartiality as possible, satirize the follies and extravagances of my countrymen, as well as of their enemies. I determined to describe every subject in the manner it struck my own imagination, and without confining myself to a perpetual effort at wit, drollery and humor, indulge every variety of manner, as my subject varied, and insert all the ridicule, satire, sense, sprightliness and elevation, of which I was master."

The work was originally published anonymously at Philadelphia under the title, "M'Fingal: an Epic Poem or The Town-Meeting," and consisted of what later became the first two cantos of the enlarged work of 1782. Cantos I and II deal with conditions and associations of the earlier years of the conflict. The third canto entitled, "The Liberty Pole," though of later date is likewise of that period in subject-matter and spirit. Canto IV sets

1. "Origin of M'Fingal," p. 11, by J. H. Trumbull.
2. "Poetical Works," II, 232.

forth "The Vision" which the old Tory 'Squire is made to have and portrays the leading events and aspects of the last years of the war—a prophecy after the event, as it were. In length, Canto IV is by far the longest, having over a thousand lines while Canto III is shortest with about four hundred less—in all over thirty-two hundred lines in the iambic tetrameter couplet metre. Trumbull tells us[1] that he meant that it should be "in every part . . . a parody of the serious epic." Speaking of his hero and his work, the poet says[2]: "The scenes in which he is engaged, the town-meeting, the mobs, the liberty-pole, the secret cabal in the cellar, the operations of tarring and feathering, etc., were acted in almost every town."

It will be well to give a rather full account of the story, in the words of the poet as far as possible—for only in this manner may an adequate appreciation of the scope of the work be suggested.

From Boston, in his best array,
Great Squire M'Fingal took his way,
And, grac'd with ensigns of renown,
Steer'd homewards to his native town.

The old Tory was of "high descent" and "stor'd with intellectual riches,"

Skill'd was our 'Squire in making speeches,
Where strength of brains united centers
With strength of lungs surpassing Stentor's.
But as some musquets so contrive it,

1. "Poetical Works," 1820 edition, I, 232.
2. Ibid., II, 232.

As oft to miss the mark they drive at,
And tho' well aim'd to duck or plover,
Bear wide and kick their owners over:
So far'd our 'Squire, whose reas'ning toil
Would often on himself recoil,
And so much injur'd more his pride,
The stronger arg'ments he apply'd;

. . . . . .

Yet at town-meetings ev'ry chief
Pinn'd faith on great M'Fingal's sleeve,
And as he motion'd all by rote,
Rais'd sympathetic hands to vote.

A vivid description follows of the town-meeting:

Where truth and falsehood, wrong and right,
Draw all their legions out to fight and where
Such dialogues with earnest face
Held never Balaam with his ass.

Honorius, the patriot spokesman, opens fire with a ringing speech during which M'Fingal arrives. Britain's past glory and dominion are touched upon with this comment:

Of all the pow'rs she once retain'd,
Conceit and pride alone remain'd.

Following comes a recital of the long series of abuses, somewhat in the manner of the Declaration itself, and following this the unavailing efforts toward peace made by the colonies. Fierce invective marks the harangue, particularly toward General Gage and the loyalists. Hear Honorius on Gage:

By Satan grac'd with full supplies,
From all his magazine of lies.

. . . . . .

Yet meanest reptiles are most venomous,
And simpletons most dang'rous enemies;
Nor e'er could Gage by craft and prowess
Have done a whit more mischief to us;
Since he began th' unnat'ral war,
The work his masters sent him for.

The reception this speech received at the hands of the Tories is well described:

Our 'Squire
No longer could contain his ire;
And rising 'midst applauding Tories,
Thus vented wrath upon Honorius.

The speech which follows is one of the best but is too long for full quotation. In an inimitable way the old 'Squire argues for the "divine right of kings" by citing first several prominent Tory divines, Myles Cooper,[1] Samuel Seabury,[2] and others, who have quoted the Scriptures themselves in defense of the doctrine.

As when the Jews a murm'ring race,
By constant grumblings fell from grace,
Heav'n taught them first to know their distance,
By famine, slav'ry and Philistines;
When these could no repentance bring,
In wrath it sent them last, a king.
So nineteen, 'tis believ'd, in twenty
Of modern kings for plagues are sent you;
Nor can your cavillers pretend,
But that they answer well their end.

1. See pp. 105, ff.
2. See pp. 58-9.

After this spiritual support, M'Fingal marshals "earthly reas'ners, too," the scribblers "that swarm'd round Rivington in cluster." In the rather trivial repartee that follows, Honorius flings this:

> "Ye perhaps in scripture spy
> A new commandment, 'Thou shalt lie;'
> And if't be soon (as who can tell?)
> There's no one sure ye keep so well."

To which the 'Squire replies that "lying is, we know and teach, The highest privilege of speech"—a thesis which he proves to have been justified from David down the ages. Shortly, he waxes personal in tone:

> Your boasted patriotism is scarce,
> And country's love is but a farce;
> And after all the proof you bring,
> We Tories know there's no such thing.
> Our English writers of great fame
> Prove public virtue but a name.
> . . . . . .
> What has poster'ty done for us,
> That we, lest they their rights should lose,
> Should trust our necks to gripe of noose?
> And who believes you will not run?
> You're cowards, ev'ry mother's son;
> And should you offer to deny,
> We've witnesses to prove it by.

Honorius awaits the close of his opponent's speech,—hears of the power and determination of Britain and her endeavors to rouse Indians and slaves to massacre and insurrection—and then replies, taking a vicious fling at Gage and his many proclamations:

While wearying out the Tories' patience,
He spent his time in proclamations;
While all his mighty noise and vapour
Was used in wrangling upon paper;
And boasted military fits
Closed in the straining of his wits;
While troops in Boston commons plac'd
Laid nought but quires of paper waste;
While strokes alternate stunn'd the nation,
Protest, address and proclamation;
And speech met speech, fib clash'd with fib,
And Gage still answer'd squib for squib.
Tho' this not all his time was lost on:
He fortified the town of Boston;
Built breastworks that might lend assistance
To keep the patriots at a distance;
(For howsoe'er the rogues might scoff,
He liked them best the farthest off)—
Of mighty use and help to aid
His courage, when he felt afraid;
And whence right off in manly station,
He'd boldly pop his proclamation,
Our hearts must in our bosoms freeze
At such heroic deeds as these.

M'Fingal follows Honorius with an "apology" for General Gage and a recital of the commander's achievements during his first year in power.

"Vain, quoth the 'Squire, you'll find to sneer
At Gage's first triumphant year;
For Providence, dispos'd to teaze us,
Can use what instruments it pleases.

. . . . . .

As Ass, in Balaam's sad disaster,
Turn'd Orator, and sav'd his master,
A Goose plac'd sentry on his station

Preserv'd old Rome from desolation;

. . . . . .

So Frogs croak'd Pharoah to repentance,
And Lice revers'd the threat'ning sentence;
And heav'n can ruin you at pleasure,
By our scorn'd Gage, as well as Caesar.

The old 'Squire asks his hearers to consider how Gage went to Concord,

To take your powder, stores and arms,
And all your means of doing harms;
As prudent folks take knives away,
Lest children cut themselves at play.

The future has nothing but triumphs for British arms, especially over those defenseless. The heavens themselves will be filled with signs and portents even

As once they fought against old Sisera.

For loyalists the future, too, is bright with promise—largess, titles, and mitres:

Ev'n I perhaps, heav'n speed my claim,
Shall fix a *Sir* before my name.

Then, in reply:

'Tis well, Honorius cried, your scheme
Has painted out a pretty dream.
We can't confute your second-sight;
We shall be slaves and you a knight;
These things must come; but I divine
They'll come not in your day, or mine.

This whole speech is a violent, exciting harangue:

To arms,
From provinces remote, afar,
The sons of glory rouse to war.
'Tis freedom calls; th' enraptur'd found
The Apalachian hills rebound:
The Georgian shores her voice shall hear,
And start from lethargies of fear.
From the parch'd zone, with glowing ray,
Where pours the sun's intenser day,
To shores where icy waters roll,
And tremble to the dusky pole,
Inspir'd by Freedom's heav'nly charms,
United nations wake to arms—
The star of conquest lights their way,
And guides their vengeance on their prey—
Yes, tho' tyrannic force oppose,
Still shall they triumph o'er their foes,
Till heav'n the happy land shall bless
With safety, liberty and peace.

Thirty-odd lines of denunciation for those that cowards be, bring the speech of Honorius to a close.

A vivid description of the noise and confusion of tongues in the hall is given. Disorder is rampant when suddenly outside sounds are heard. All rush out.

Our 'Squire M'Fingal straitway beckon'd
The constable to stand his second,
And sallied forth with aspect fierce
The crowd assembled to disperse.
The Moderator out of view
Beneath a bench had lain perdue;
Peep'd up his head to view the fray,
Beheld the wranglers run away,
And left alone with solemn face,
Adjourn'd them without time or place.

The original "M'Fingal" here ends—Canto II of the later edition.

Canto III—"The Liberty Pole"—is of all by far the most interesting and dramatic, if such a term may be used. It details the steps in the downfall of the redoubtable old Tory 'Squire who, having witnessed the formal dedication of the Liberty Pole, savagely attacks those who took part, in a long harangue of nearly two hundred and fifty lines.

What mad brain'd rebel gave commission,
To raise this May-pole of sedition?
Like Babel rear'd by bawling throngs,
With like confusion too of tongues,
To point at heav'n and summon down,
The thunders of the British crown?
Say will this paltry pole secure
Your forfeit heads from Gage's pow'r?
Attack'd by heroes brave and crafty,
Is this to stand your ark of safety?

. . . . . .

Ye dupes to ev'ry factious rogue,
Or tavern-prating demagogue,
Whose tongue but rings, with sound more full,
On th' empty drumhead of his skull,
Behold you know not what noisy fools
Use you, worse simpletons, for tools.

What an ignorant rabble you will have in high places, give liberty full power!

While every dunce, that turns the plains
Tho' bankrupt in estate and brains,
By this new light transform'd to traitor,
Forsakes his plow to turn dictator,
Starts an haranguing chief of Whigs,
And drags you by the ears, like pigs,

Congress, too, is criticised, its well-known impotency in executive matters being cleverly hit:

For what's your congress, or its end?
A power t' advise and recommend;
To call for troops, adjust your quotas
And yet no soul is bound to notice.

After picturing, on the other hand, the British Constitution and speaking disparagingly of the work already done by the patriots in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, M'Fingal closes with an appeal to his Tory partisans:

'Tis done, fair Mercy shuts her door;
And vengeance now shall sleep no more;
Rise then, my friends, in terror rise,
And wipe this scandal from the skies.

His speech delivered, the 'Squire orders the riot-act read but the constable speaks just five words—"Our sov'reign Lord the King"—when he is stopped short by the clamorous rabble. Battle-royal ensues to be ended by the suggestion of single combat. M'Fingal joins issue with his Whig adversary but his sword snaps short and he is left defenseless. His friends forsake him and he endeavors to flee but age is not on his side; he is seized, lifted aloft and "hung self-balanc'd on his center," dangling about the pole he detested. The time is ripe for recantation and he is let down only to renew his blustering speech-making, defying his tormentors who forthwith proceed to tar and feather him after a mock, improvised court has passed sentence. A trip around the town follows:

Then on the two-wheel'd car of state,
They rais'd our grand Duumvirate,

And as at Rome a like committee,
That found an owl within their city,
With solemn rites and sad processions,
At ev'ry shrine perform'd lustrations;
And lest infection should abound
From prodigy with face so round,
All Rome attends him thro' the street,
In triumph to his country-seat;
With like devotion all the choir
Paraded round our feather'd 'Squire;
In front the martial music comes,
Of horns and fiddles, fifes and drums,
With jingling sound of carriage bells,
And treble creak of rusted wheels;
Behind, the crowd in lengthen'd row,
With grave procession closed the show,
And at fit periods ev'ry throat
Combin'd in universal shout,
And hail'd great Liberty in chorus,
Or bawl'd, Confusion to the Tories.

Their burden set once more at the pole, the crowd betake themselves to the tavern to end the days as such crowds do. The 'Squire with constable alone remains to ponder the strange happenings of the day:

His visual nerve, well purg'd with tar,
Saw all the coming scenes of war.
Vainly the cry of vain hope he utters;
Behold my doom! this feather'd omen
Portends what dismal times are coming.

In Canto IV—"The Vision"—we are in M'Fingal's cellar, "The Tory Pandemonium." The 'Square is speaking—evil days are approaching, when

Tar yet in embryo in the pine
Shall run, on Tories' backs to shine.

Sadly, he murmurs:

For me, before these fatal days
I mean to fly th' accursed place,
And follow omens, which of late
Have warn'd me of impending fate,
Yet pass'd unnotic'd o'er my view,
Till sad conviction proved them true;
As prophesies of best intent
Are only heeded in th' event.

In a vision of the night, an old Tory, one Malcolm, with noose about his neck, has warned the 'Squire to flee the wrath to come for the prophetic sight reveals the rebels victorious at Bemis's Heights, at Bennington, at Stony Point, and elsewhere.

This done, he turn'd, and saw the tale
Had dyed my trembling cheeks with pale:
Then pitying in a milder vein
Pursued the visionary strain.

The victories of Britain shall be those occasioned by starvation, prisons, etc. Her commanders shall succeed each other—Howe, Clinton, Burgoyne, Cornwallis—to ill effect.

'Twere vain to paint in vision'd show,
The mighty nothings done by Howe:
What towns he takes in mortal fray
As stations, whence to run away.

Event will follow hard upon event—Greene in the Carolinas at first; then, in Virginia. Finally, the warning of personal danger close at hand. Britain's decline and

America's rise are prefigured. But the meeting abruptly adjourns:

> For now the Whigs intell'gence found,
> Of Tories must'ring under ground,
> And with rude bangs and loud uproar,
> 'Gan thunder furious at the door.

All run to cover, the 'Squire himself making headway, literally and figuratively, through a convenient window, proceeding toward Boston and leaving his friends to enjoy whatever penalties and ignominy may be theirs.

Such is "M'Fingal," most ambitious and most widely discussed of revolutionary works in verse. Criticism has ranged from the highest adulation of the genius displayed in this masterpiece of Trumbull to an expression of good-natured contempt for its pretension to any literary merit whatever. In Lossing's edition of the work[1] Timothy Dwight of Yale, compatriot, "a brother poet,[2] and a friend of the author," is quoted. "Without any impartiality," asserts Dwight ". . . 'M'Fingal' is not inferior in wit and humor to 'Hudibras'; and in every other respect superior. . . . The versification is far better, the poetry is in several instances in a good degree elegant, and in some even sublime." Lossing himself thinks that "of all the literary productions of the day, having for its theme the character and doings of the men and times of the Revolution, [it is] confessedly most deserving of immortality." So discriminating a critic as Professor Tyler is also enthusiastic. "No literary production was ever a more genuine

1. "M'Fingal: An Epic Poem," pp. 4, 5.
2. See p. 66, on "The Hartford Wits."

embodiment of the spirit and life of a people, in the midst of a stirring and world-famous conflict, than is 'M'Fingal' an embodiment of the spirit and life of the American people, in the midst of that stupendous conflict which formed our great epoch of national deliverance."[1] Others have been far less laudatory.

A careful reading of the poem will surely not reveal to the present day reader any lines conspicuously touching the heights sublime and candor will forbid his accepting an overstatement of its merits. Nevertheless, one can hardly peruse those four cantos of John Trumbull with their at times sparkling and not too bitter humor, their rugged characterization of men and events, their turgid raillery, without experiencing through the mere reading something of that feeling which doubtless in the day of its appearing caused men to be touched and moved by its vigor of word and phrase, its extravagant speechifying, its very "spread eagleism," a quality, indeed, in our literary work as a nation which lingered on even to, if not beyond, the mid-years of the following century. At all events, "M'Fingal" was most popular, if we may judge by the fact, as one investigator[2] does, "that there were more than thirty pirated impressions of the poem in pamphlet and other forms" appearing in its time.

We have reviewed the verse produced during the period of controversy and if our quotations have served their purpose they have revealed the essence of the feeling en-

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1. "Literary History of the American Revolution," II, 342.
2. W. L. Stone, in "Ballads and Poems relating to the Burgoyne Campaign," p. 15.

gendered in the hearts of the colonists, the doubts of some, the hopes of others, and have testified to the fact that while there were those in the colonies who could use the instrument of verse hardly with the touch of genius, there were yet not wanting many who attained a certain effectiveness after all, with a somewhat facile manner not ill-adapted to the end toward which their verse was written.

PART II

FROM THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE TO THE TREATY OF ALLIANCE

CHAPTER VI

JULY 4TH, 1776

Early military operations, 1775-1776—Canada—Massachusetts,—evacuation of Boston by British—"A Military Song"—President Myles Cooper, Tory—his life—a poem in exile—"Common Prayer for the Times"—The Declaration of Independence—Thomas Paine—John Dickinson—Rev. Jonathan Odell—his life—an ode on the king's birthday—The Declaration published and read—Washington's letter to the President of Congress—the bards—"On Independence."

THROUGH the remainder of the year 1775 after July and through the earlier months of the following year, Washington planned to bide his time, endeavoring patiently to drill and train his rude soldiery into an efficient fighting force. Not until spring when cannon and other aid had arrived from Canada,—brought back after the ill-starred expedition thither,—did the patriot commander deem it wise to take the offensive. In March, however, we find operations in force looking toward the seizure of Boston, with Washington entrenched on Dorchester Heights overlooking and commanding the city.

Then the foe trembled at the well-known name;
And raptur'd thousands to his standards came,
His martial skill our rising armies form'd;

His patriot zeal their gen'rous bosom warm'd;
His voice inspired, his godlike presence led,
The Britons saw, and from his presence fled.[1]

On the 17th of that month the British army under Howe evacuated Boston never to return and the colonial troops took possession. No event could have caused more general exultation. The city of so much feud and contention came at last under the complete influence of a new regime, and forever.

Yet it remained gravely doubtful just what the next movement of the enemy would be. Brackenridge commemorated the evacuation in "A Military Song, by the Army, of General Washington's Victorious entry into the town of Boston," of which these stanzas:

Sons of valor, taste the glories
  Of celestial Liberty;
Sing a triumph o'er the tories,
  Let the pulse of joy run high.

Heaven hath this day foil'd the many
  Fallacies of George the King;
Let the echo reach Britany,
  Bid her mountain summits ring.

See yon navy swell the bosom,
  Of the late enraged sea;
Where'er they go, we shall oppose them,
  Sons of valor must be free.

1. "Address to the Armies of the United States of America," "written during the American Revolutionary War"; over two hundred and fifty couplets in length. "Poems by Col. David Humphreys, late Aid-de-Camp to His Excellency General Washington," Philadelphia, 1789; p. 7.

Should they touch at fair Rhode Island,
  There to combat with the brave,
Driven from each dale and highland,
  They shall plough the purple wave.

Should they thence to fair Virginia,
  Send a squadron to Dunmore,
Still with fear and ignominy,
  They shall quit the hostile shore.

In New York state rejoin'd by Clinton,
  Should their standards mock the air,
Many a surgeon shall put lint on
  Wounds of death received there.

War, fierce war, shall break their forces,
  Nerves of tory men shall fail,
Seeing Howe with alter'd courses,
  Bending to the western gale.[1]

Still, in contrast to the above sentiments, we read in the stanzas of the Reverend Dr. Myles Cooper the deep lament over his exile from America which his devotion to the mother-country occasioned. Dr. Cooper was born in 1735 in England and educated at Oxford. Coming to America in the early sixties, he became associated on the loyalist side with other churchmen such as the Reverend Samuel Seabury.[2] In 1763 he succeeded the Reverend Dr. Samuel Johnson as president of King's College in New York City, which subsequently reorganized as Columbia College. It seems that in the darkness of a night in May, 1775, the reverend president, none too comfortably clad, was obliged to make a hasty retirement from his home on

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 122-125.
2. See p. 59.

the college campus and to take a convenient ship for England. His well-known loyalist sympathies and views on the question of the hour appear to have caused a mob to assemble about his house, shortly compelling his flight. The youthful Alexander Hamilton, later of Washington's military staff, seems through his eloquent pleading to have had not a little to do with the presence of whatever grace attached to Dr. Cooper's departure.[1]

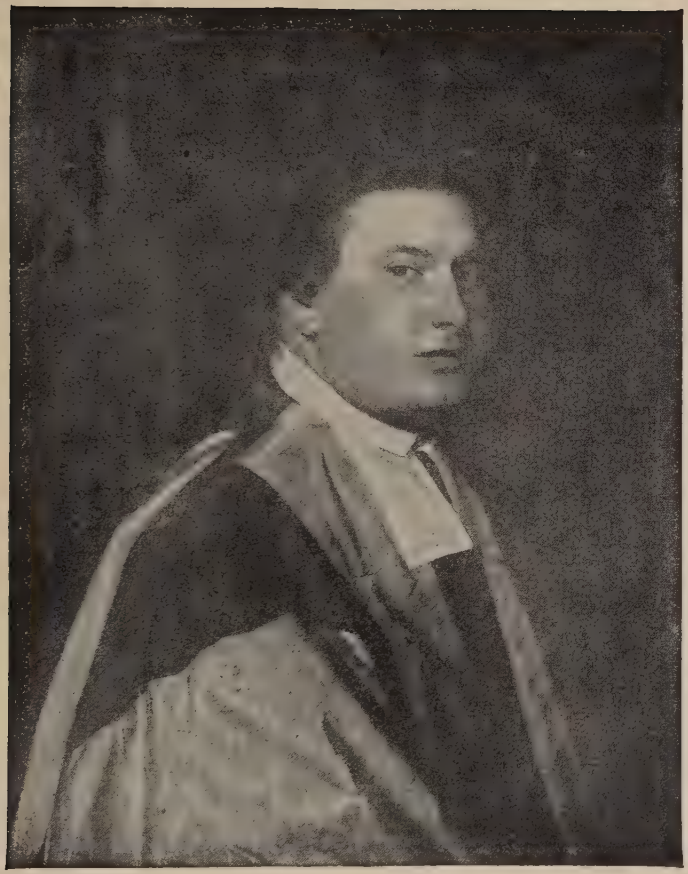
The poem following in part, was composed for the first anniversary of the King's College president's leave-taking. It is evidently a sincere expression of enlightened Tory feeling. There are sixteen stanzas in all; it begins:

> To thee, O God, by whom I live,
> The tribute of my soul to give
> On this eventful day,
> To thee, O God, my voice I raise;
> To thee address my grateful praise,
> And swell the duteous lay.
>
> Now has this orb increasing run
> Its annual circuit round the sun,
> Since when the heirs of strife,
> Led by the pale moon's midnight ray,
> And bent on mischief, urged their way,
> To seize my guiltless life.

The reverend Tory here continued for seven stanzas, reciting the rude waking he had received, his escape, the mob's entering his rooms, and the search made for him through the college building.

> Meanwhile along the sounding shore,
> Where Hudson's waves incessant roar,

1. Dr. Cooper remained abroad, dying in Edinburgh, 1785. See "A History of Columbia University, 1754-1904."



Myles Cooper

I work my weary way;
And skirt the windings of the tide,
My faithful pupil by my side,
Nor wish the approach of day.

Reaching a ship convenient in the harbor, he goes aboard:

Now, all composed, from danger far,
I hear no more the din of war,
Nor shudder at alarms;
But safely sink each night to rest,
No malice rankling through my breast,
In Freedom's fostering arms.

Though stript of most the world admires,
Yet, torn by few untamed desires,
I rest in calm content;
And humbly hope a gracious Lord
Again those blessings will afford
Which once his bounty lent.

Yet still, for many a faithful friend,
Shall, day by day, my vows ascend
Thy dwelling, O my God!
Who steady still in virtue's cause
Despising faction's mimic laws,
The paths of peace have trod.

Nor yet, for friends alone—for all,
Too prone to heed sedition's call,
Hear me, indulgent Heav'n!
O may they cast their arms away,
To thee and George submission pay,
Repent, and be forgiven!

Another Tory piece throws light upon a different aspect of feeling among the loyalists. There were many

like Dr. Cooper who believed that submission was due the king but there were those, too, who with clearer, surer insight seemed to appreciate more justly the deeper significance of the great controversy and to perceive that a new nation must sooner or later arise on this side of the Atlantic, which either should be independent of all allegiance to the mother-country or, while nominally dependent, should be virtually autonomous. The view of the latter of these two classes is well expressed in the following poem, "Common Prayer for the Times," which breathed a hope for the possible reunion:

Since we are taught in Scripture word
To pray for friends and foes;
Then let us pray for George the Third,
Who must be one of those.

Heaven bless America, and Britain,
May folly past suffice,
Wherein they have each other smitten,
Who ought to harmonize.

Allied by blood, and interest too,
Soon let them re-unite.
May Heaven tyrannic minds subdue,
Haste, haste the pleasing sight.

May ev'ry morn and ev'ning prayer
Repeat this just petition,
What thinking Christian can forbear
Appris'd of our condition.[1]

After leaving Boston the British proceeded north to Halifax but soon transferred their operations to the Hud-

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads"; p. 126.

son and prepared in due time to take New York. Great concern, however, had been felt in the general uncertainty as to their course, following the evacuation of Boston. Upon learning their objective Washington determined to throw his strength toward thwarting their purposes. But before the campaign on Long Island, the first storm centre in the military operations in New York and New Jersey, a great and decisive step had been taken by the Continental Congress in session at the State House of Philadelphia. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia in early June had introduced a resolution of momentous import declaring explicitly that "these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." A committee of five, with Thomas Jefferson of Virginia as chairman, was appointed to draw up a formal paper embodying the idea of Lee's resolution. After long and heated discussion, the final vote on the draft prepared by the committee was taken and the Declaration of Independence adopted on the fourth of July.

All through the earlier months of 1776 affairs had been gradually tending toward an official declaration of separation from the parent state. In fact, there had been from the beginning certain leaders more ardent than others and more reckless, too, doubtless, who had seen what their fellows either did not or would not see to be the final issue in debate. Samuel Adams was of these earliest and most radical. In January, Thomas Paine had written his "Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs" and

said:[1] "Everything that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries—'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong proof that the authority of the one over the other, was never the design of Heaven . . . As to government matters, 'tis not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice: the business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six months to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness. There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease."

There were not wanting, though, statesmen of stout and sincere heart and strong mind during those famous sessions following the introduction of the resolution of June 7th, who were hard to dislodge from the position they had taken that the course debated was unwise and least assured of success. John Dickinson[2] of Pennsylvania, a tower of strength in his day, felt certain that it was an "inopportune time which had been chosen for a final separation." In his "Vindication" of 1783, he explains his stand on the great pronouncement and declares that it was one, not of denial of "the right and authority of

1. Conway's "Writings of Thomas Paine," I, 89 and 92.
2. See p. 41.

Congress to make it," but rather merely of the wisdom of "the policy of the *then* making it."[1]

While the great Congress was in lively session, a Tory clergyman, the Reverend Dr. Jonathan Odell, greatest singer on the loyal side, was composing the following not unworthy ode[2] for the King's birthday, the fourth of June:

O'er Britannia's happy Land,
Rul'd by George's mild command,
On this bright, auspicious day
Loyal hearts their tribute pay.
Ever sacred be to mirth
The day that gave our Monarch birth!

There the thundering Cannon's roar
Echoes round from shore to shore;
Royal Banners wave on high;
Drums and trumpets rend the sky.

There our comrades clad in Arms,
Long enured to War's alarms,
Marshall'd all in bright array
Welcome this returning day.

There, the temples chime their bells;
And the pealing anthem swells;
And the gay, the grateful throng
Join the loud triumphant song!

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1. See "Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania," vol. XII. "Life and Writings of John Dickinson," pp. 190-1. An excellent account of the proceedings leading to the adoption of the Declaration and an exposition of its merits will be found in Tyler: "Literary History of the American Revolution"; I, 494-521.

2. "Printed from the author's copy, collated with a contemporaneous Manuscript;" Sargent: "Loyal Verses;" pp. 7-8.

O'er this Land among the rest,
Till of late supremely blest,
George, to sons of Britain dear,
Swell'd the song from year to year.

Here, we now lament to find
Sons of Britain, fierce and blind,
Drawn from loyal love astray,
Hail no more this welcome day.

When by foreign Foes dismay'd,
Thankless Sons, ye call'd for aid;
Then, *we* gladly fought and bled,
And your Foes in triumph led.

Now, by Fortune's blind command,
Captives in your hostile Land;
To this lonely spot we stray
Here unseen to hail this day!

Though by Fortune thus betray'd,
For a while we seek the shade,
Still our loyal hearts are free—
Still devoted, George, to thee!

Britain, Empress of the Main,
Fortune envies thee in vain,
Safe, while Ocean round thee flows,
Though the *world* were *all* thy Foes.

Long as Sun and Moon endure
Britain's Throne shall stand secure,
And great George's royal line
There in splendid honor shine.
Ever sacred be to Mirth
The day that gave our Monarch birth!

The author of the above loyal piece was indeed ardent

in the cause he espoused. Having attached himself in his earlier years to the king's forces in a medical capacity, Dr. Odell turned to the ministry of the Church of England in the colonies and became rector of a church (St. Mary's Episcopal) at Burlington, New Jersey. Subsequently, he was chaplain to a Tory regiment in New York. The close of the war brought him the common trouble and anxiety which were the lot of so many of his views and he retired with the British flag to other soil, settling and remaining in the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In 1818, well past the four-score mark, he died. The work of Dr. Odell was considerable and was informed with an intelligent appreciation of the forces in conflict and he showed his sincerity no less than the men whose opinion on the vital concern of his day he declined to accept or follow.

Congress lost little time in issuing orders to the commander-in-chief to cause the Declaration to be "proclaimed at the head of the army." Less than a week after the adoption of the instrument, Washington in a letter from New York wrote to the President of Congress, John Hancock; "Agreeably to the request of the Congress, I caused the Declaration to be proclaimed before all the army under my immediate command; and have the pleasure to inform them, that the measure seemed to have their most hearty assent; the expressions and behavior, both of officers and men, testifying their warmest approbation of it." Upon receipt of the congressional instructions, the General had expressed to his men the hope that "this important Event will serve as a fresh incentive to

every officer and soldier, to act with Fidelity and Courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his Country, depends (under God) solely on the success of our Arms: And that he is now in the service of the State, possessed of sufficient power to reward his merit and advance him to the highest Honors of a free Country."[1]

Upon our grand Congress, may heaven bestow
  Both wisdom and skill our good to pursue;
On heaven alone dependent we'll be,
  But from all earthly tyrants we mean to be free.

Unto our brave generals may heaven give skill,
  Our armies to guide and the sword for to wield;
May their hands taught to war and their fingers to fight,
  Be able to put British armies to flight.

And now, brave Americans, since it is so,
  That we are independent we'll have them to know,
That united we are, and united we'll be,
  And from all British tyrants we'll try to keep free.

May heaven smile on us in all our endeavours,
  Safeguard our sea-ports, our towns and our rivers;
Keep us from invaders, by land and by sea,
  And from all who'd deprive us of our liberty.[2]

As we shall see in the chapter to follow, there was grave need of encouragement for the soldiers in the ensuing months to take part in the now famous retreat from

1. "Writings of George Washington," collected and edited by Worthington C. Ford, IV, 224-226.

2. "Freeman's Journal, or New Hampshire Gazette," August 17, 1776; quoted by Duyckinck: "Cyclopaedia of American Literature," I, 464.

the Hudson to the Delaware and the wisdom of their commander as shown by the words of his Orderly Book is only too apparent. Practical building up of spirits was of all things most needful. The hour of great trial was approaching. Again and again, as will appear later on, Washington himself felt keenly the character of the position in which he found his discouraged and depleted forces and in letter after letter he freely expressed his concern.

The bards lent encouragement in the newspapers and broadsides of the day. Witness one of their numerous effusions appropriately entitled, "On Independence," and issued little over a month after the Declaration:

Come all you brave soldiers, both valiant and free,
  It's for Independence we all now agree,
Let us gird on our swords, and prepare to defend
  Our liberty, property, ourselves and our friends.

In a cause that's so righteous, come let us agree,
  And from hostile invaders set America free;
The cause is so glorious we need not to fear
  But from merciless tyrants we'll set ourselves clear.

Heaven's blessing attending us, no tyrant shall say
  That Americans e'er to such monsters gave way;
But, fighting, we'll die in America's cause,
  Before we'll submit to tyrannical laws.

George the Third, of Great Britain, no more shall he
      reign,
  With unlimited sway o'er these free states again;
Lord North, nor old Bute, nor none of their clan,
  Shall ever be honor'd by an American.

May heaven's blessing descend on our United States,
And grant that the union may never abate;
May love, peace and harmony ever be found
For to go hand in hand America round.

CHAPTER VII

"THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS"

Washington's movements following Howe—Brooklyn Heights—grave concern—Nathan Hale: spy—his mission; its purpose and results—poem thereon—The retreat through New Jersey—a dreary summer and autumn—"the times that try men's souls"—David Humphreys's verse—Letters of Washington describing his situation—Rev. Wheeler Case on the victory at Trenton—"The Cornwalliad" and lingering echoes.

AS we have already intimated in the chapter just closed, Washington, on learning Howe's intention and apparent design, moved his command southwest from Boston to a new base in an endeavor to save New York if possible from its threatening fall. Troops and fleet in concert augured well for the success of the British plans after their arrival at Staten Island in New York Harbor. The battle of August 27th on Brooklyn Heights, about where Prospect Park now is, was a severe shock with shadow-throwing results. The chances of the continued occupation of the city at the Hudson's mouth seemed dimmer. It was evident at once to the American commander that he must change his position and he was again in grave doubt as to the future operations of the enemy. "At no period of the war was Washington oppressed with keener anxieties of a heavier responsibility than during the twenty days immediately following the

battle of Long Island."[1] The Americans after their defeat had crossed the East River and taken up their position along the opposite shore. Doubt as to Howe's next move was uppermost in the mind of their commander-in-chief. In order to secure information on this point Washington sought the services of a spy. One was soon found in the person of Nathan Hale, a young graduate of Yale and a captain in "Knowlton's Rangers," a vigilant and daring band of "about one hundred and fifty men and twenty officers" organized to learn the movements of the enemy and to report forthwith to headquarters any information they might ascertain. No need here of entering at length into the work of young Hale. It has been told and retold many times. Suffice it to recall his energy and enthusiasm in the service of his country, his heroic and touching death at British hands. His mission seems to have been of no direct avail but the memory of it and of its end lingered vividly on in the minds of the young martyr's comrades-in-arms.[2] Hale's character and purpose appear, indeed, to have been lofty and his own words give one an impression of the sincere patriotism of which his may be considered a type. "If the exigencies of my country demand a peculiar service," said he, "its claims to perform that service are imperious."[3] And his final words will be remembered always: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."[4]

Single valorous deeds such as Nathan Hale's seldom

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1. H. P. Johnston: "Nathan Hale," N. Y., 1901; p. 89.
2. See p. 175.
3. Johnston: p. 100.
4. Ibid., p. 108.

failed of remembrance in verse, and it is truly remarkable how many such afforded a theme for the ballad writers. Witness the following[1]—one of the best—on Hale's capture and death:

The breezes went steadily thro' the tall pines,
A saying "oh! hu-sh!" a saying "oh hu-sh!"
As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse,
For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the bush.

"Keep still!" said the thrush as she nestled her young,
In a nest by the road, in a nest by the road;
"For the tyrants are near, and with them appear,
What bodes us no good; what bodes us no good."

The brave captain heard it, and thought of his house,
In a cot by the brook; in a cot by the brook;
With mother and sister and memories dear,
He so gaily forsook; he so gaily forsook.

Cooling shades of the night were coming apace,
The tattoo had beat; the tattoo had beat,
The noble one sprang from his dark lurking place,
To make his retreat; to make his retreat.

He warily trod on the dry rustling leaves,
As he pass'd thro' the wood; as he passed thro' the wood;
And silently gain'd his rude launch on the shore,
As she play'd with the flood; as she play'd with the flood.

The guards of the camp, on that dark, dreary night,
Had a murderous will; had a murderous will;
They took him and bore him afar from the shore,
To a hut on the hill; to a hut on the hill.

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 131-33.

No mother was there, nor a friend who could cheer,
  In that little stone cell; in that little stone cell;
But he trusted in love, from his father above.
  In his heart, all was well; in his heart, all was well.

An ominous owl with his solemn base voice,
  Sat moaning hard by; sat moaning hard by;
"The tyrant's proud minions most gladly rejoice,
  For he must soon die; for he must soon die."

The brave fellow told them, nothing he restrain'd,
  The cruel gen'ral; the cruel gen'ral;
His errand from camp, of the ends to be gain'd,
  And said that was all; and said that was all.

They took him and bound him and bore him away,
  Down the hill's grassy side; down the hill's grassy side.
'Twas there the base hirelings, in royal array,
  His cause did deride; his cause did deride.

Five minutes were given, short moments, no more,
  For him to repent; for him to repent;
He pray'd for his mother, he ask'd not another,
  To Heaven he went; to Heaven he went.

The faith of the martyr, the tragedy shew'd,
  As he trod the last stage; as he trod the last stage;
And Britons will shudder at gallant Hale's blood,
  As his words do presage, as his words do presage.

"Thou pale king of terrors, thou life's gloomy foe,
  Go frighten the slave, go frighten the slave;
Tell tyrants, to you their allegiance they owe,
  No fears for the brave, no fears for the brave."

The patriot arms had not equalled in achievement the expectations of the people during the latter half of the

year 1776. Long Island and what followed—with the loss of New York and the lower Hudson—served to fill with something akin to despair the hearts of those who had seen in the July Declaration a master-stroke in statecraft. It was certainly a dreary summer, autumn and early winter for Washington on whom everything seemed centred and on whom appeared to rest the destinies that should be. His retreat after Harlem Heights and White Plains with all that could be called the American army, though brilliant and masterly of its kind, must have been disheartening, indeed, if it did not seem even to border upon the ignominious. It is proof of the character of the man and of the trust his men put in his character and ability that the cause in which they struggled did not totally collapse. "These are the times that try men's souls," wrote Paine in the "Pennsylvania Journal" of the 19th of December, 1776. "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of every man and woman. Tyranny like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value."[1]

A perusal of Washington's letters during this trying period will reveal only too clearly how deep his anxiety for a victory of an arresting scope must have been. On the tenth of December we read his urgent words impor-

1. "Writings of Thomas Paine," ed. by M. D. Conway; I, 170.

tuning the stubborn and recalcitrant General Charles Lee to proceed forthwith with his much needed wing of the army. "Do come on; your arrival may be happy, and if it can be effected without delay, it may be the means of preserving a city,[1] whose loss must prove of the most fatal consequence to the cause of America."[2] And on the same day these further sentences to another:[3] "I wish to Heaven it was in my power to give you a more favorable account of our situation than it is. Our numbers, quite inadequate to the task of opposing that part of the army under the command of General Howe, being reduced by sickness, desertion, and political deaths . . . were obliged to retire before the enemy, who were perfectly well-informed of our situation, till we came to this place, where I have no idea of being able to make a stand, as my numbers, till joined by the Philadelphia militia, did not exceed three thousand men fit for duty. Now, we may be about five thousand to oppose Howe's whole army[4] . . . I tremble for Philadelphia." Surely, a picture hard to behold when the responsibility of a country's liberties rests upon one's shoulders!

On that memorable Christmas Eve, the day before his brilliant advance upon Trenton, the commander-in-chief wrote to the President of Congress from his "camp, above Trenton Falls": "That I should dwell upon the subject of our distresses, cannot be more disagreeable to Congress

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1. Philadelphia.
2. "Writings of George Washington," ed. by W. C. Ford; V. 75.
3. Lund Washington. See "Writings;" V. 77-8.
4. Later on, Washington estimates his force at less than half Howe's in number.

than it is painful to myself. The alarming situation, to which our affairs are reduced, impels me to the measure. Inquiry and investigation, which in most cases serve to develop and point out a remedy, in ours, present more and greater difficulties. Till of late, I was led to hope from report, that no inconsiderable part of the troops comparing the regiments that were with General Lee, and those from Ticonderoga under General Gates, had enlisted again. This intelligence, I confess, gave me reason to expect, that I should have, at the expiration of the present year, a force somewhat more respectable, than what I find will be the case."[1] Such was the state of mind, freely revealed, of the commander himself on the eve of his signal triumph.

It will be remembered that at this very hour the Hessian soldiers hired by the British king were preparing for the festivities of the Christmastide at Trenton. Distressed as he was, Washington determined to throw his full strength across the Delaware in three divisions, to march upon the city and, engaging every resource possible, to compass its fall. Art and poetry have aided history in telling the story of the memorable night:

> Where the great chief, o'er Del'ware's icy wave,
> Led the small band, in danger doubly brave,
> On high designed—and ere the dawning hour,
> Germania's vet'rans own'd the victor's power.[2]

Washington's two-fold success—at Trenton and, less than a fortnight thereafter, at Princeton where Corn-

1. "Writings," V, 128-9.
2. "Poems," by Col. David Humphreys, p. 11.

wallis was out-generalled—was a great personal triumph and coming just when it did—the outlook on every side, as we have noted, for all the weeks of the dreary retreat apparently far from bright—was seized upon in many a song and ballad and sung alike at camp and fireside. Hopes rose, hearts seemed lighter and renewed courage moved men to enlist for longer terms of service in the field. A patriot clergyman and obscure bard, the Reverend Wheeler Case,[1] expressed the sentiment of joy as follows:[2]

> O what a blessing to the States! it is our bliss,
> Great Washington was rais'd for such a day as this.
> How good, how kind is most indulgent heav'n,
> That such a leader to our army's given!
> What great exploits he and his troops have done!
> How bravely they have fought, what vict'ries won.
> It was the Lord that did their breasts inspire
> With thirst for liberty and martial fire.
> 'Twas he their operations plann'd so well,
> And fought for them, e'en when ten thousand fell,
> When these affairs are view'd and duly scann'd,
> He's blind that does not see Jehovah's hand.
> See Washington thro' *Jersey* State retreat,
> His foes rejoice, they thought that he was beat;
> *Howe* him pursues with speed, he presses on,
> He thought the day his own, the vict'ry won.
> The *secret* friends of *George* their off'rings bring,
> They boldly raise their head, and own their King:
> O gloom is spread around, alas! what grief,
> We know not where to go to find relief.
> A storm of snow and hail the Lord sent down,
> A blessed season this for *Washington*:
> He now return'd, and thro' the storm he press'd,
> And caught twelve hundred *Hessians* in their nest.

1. See p. 158.
2. "Revolutionary Memorials, embracing Poems," pp. 40-44.

And echoes of it all were not soon to die away, for, over two years after the event, we read in a lengthy mock-epic of a rather common type, "The Cornwalliad, an Heroi-Comic Poem,"[1] amid a long series of achievements of the British general, a reference to his movements following his surprise at Princeton:

> I sing the prowess of that martial chief,
> Who bravely patient bore a weight of grief,
> On that sad eve that closed the march he made,
> From Trenton hills to Brunswic,[2] retrograde.

1. "The United States Magazine," March to June, 1770. Composed of four cantos: I, 133-4, 181-2; II, 232-3, 278-9; 317-18; III, 394-400; IV, 431-33. The work ends abruptly with the statement: "The rest is wanting."

2. Cornwallis made winter headquarters at New Brunswick.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO CRITICAL YEARS

Campaign of Burgoyne in New York about the upper Hudson, 1777—the British proclamation and parodies thereof—the "Green Mountain Boys"—Jane McCrea—St. Leger—Herkimer—Surrender at Saratoga—Joel Barlow's "Vision of Columbus" quoted—Convention with France, 1778—"The Northern Campaign"—Gen. Gates—"To Britain"—Joseph Stansbury's "Ode for the Year 1778"—Tory feeling on the French Alliance—Patriotism of Women—Francis Hopkinson—his life and place—"The Battle of the Kegs"—Freneau's "America Independent."—Our navy—the "Alliance"—Freneau's poem.

BEFORE it closed, the year 1777 saw the American cause far more advanced than it had been during either of the preceding years. Rumor was soon abroad that a new plan had been adopted by the ministry with the intent that its fulfillment should mean the complete crushing of the revolutionists' hopes. General John Burgoyne, a member of Parliament and a veteran soldier who had already seen service in America, was appointed to lead the British forces to victory. His orders called for a thorough campaign to eventuate in the subjugation and control of New York state and the Hudson valley with the consequent separation of New England from the middle and southern colonies. The British arms had failed in New England but had succeeded at the mouth of

the Hudson. It was therefore determined to try to further the conquest in that region. Howe was expected to capture Philadelphia, move on to New York and thence up the Hudson. Burgoyne would march south from the St. Lawrence toward Albany. A detachment from Oswego east would bring the Mohawk country also into line. Such, in brief, was the plan and the fulfillment thereof appeared simple and easy of accomplishment.

It was Burgoyne's belief and fond hope that he would have the cordial support of the inhabitants through whose territory he planned to march. From the border south to Albany, his objective, the British commander felt assured of the loyalist sympathies of the common folk. With their aid, moral and material, he confidently pressed forward to what, he trusted, would be the triumphantly successful and decisive issue of his campaign. His proclamation, dated at his camp near Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain, July 2, 1777, bespeaks the British mind. Burgoyne declares: "The forces entrusted to my command, are designed to act in concert, and upon a common principle, with the numerous armies and fleets which already display in every quarter of America, the power, the justice, and, when properly sought, the mercy of the King." The pompous wordiness of the whole proclamation served admirably the satirist's purposes and in the current newspapers the bards took the matter up in their characteristic way.

It will not be necessary here to enter at length into the history of this much heralded yet singularly unsuccessful invasion that made the year 1777 forever memorable—how, to secure needed reinforcements, Burgoyne des-

patched Baum to Bennington, only to lose all he sent through the vigilance and bravery of the "Green Mountain Boys" under Stark—how the Indians at a critical moment forsook the British standards and how, in one sad episode, the redskins slew the far-famed Jane McCrea.[1] Nor shall we dwell upon St. Leger's futile effort to reach Albany nor on the sacrifice of Herkimer, "one of God's nobility,"[2] in the bloody ravine of Oriskany, nor on the skill of Schuyler and the bold bravery of Arnold, far yet from treason—how they and Gates met the foe and overwhelmed him at Bemis's Heights and Freeman's Farm and how, finally, in mid-October the proud invader was brought to surrender at Saratoga. Next to the campaigns in the South under Greene and Washington, Lafayette and Rochambeau—in the Carolinas first and in Virginia later—this checking of the British in New York in 1777 was, in the large, the most spectacular as a military success and as an earnest of future possibilities that American arms performed during the whole struggle.

Joel Barlow in his "Vision of Columbus," previously discussed,[3] will furnish us a full-length picture of Burgoyne's campaign:

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1. The fate of Miss McCrea was one of the most widely known of Revolutionary tragic episodes. The young girl's brother was a patriot but her young lover, one David Jones, was in the British army. On her way to meet him early in the summer of 1777 her party was surprised by an Indian, a famous Wyandot, near Fort Edward and she was cruelly murdered. See Fiske: "American Revolution."

2. See "Oriskany," by J. Watts De Peyster in "Magazine of American History," II, 1, p. 23.

3. See pp. 66, ff.

Now, where dread Lawrence mingles with the main,
Rose, on the widening wave, a hostile train
From shore to shore, along the unfolding skies,
Beneath full sails, the approaching squadrons rise;
High-waving on the right red banners dance,
And British legions o'er the decks advance;
While at their side an azure flag, display'd,
Leads a long host, in German robes array'd.

Tall, on the boldest bark, superior shone
A warrior, ensign'd with a various crown;
Myrtles and laurels equal honours join'd,
Which arms had purchased and the Muses twined;
His sword waved forward, and his ardent eye
Seem'd sharing empires in the southern sky.
Beside him rose a herald, to proclaim
His various honours, titles, feats, and fame;
Who raised an opening scroll, where proudly shone
Pardon to realms and nations yet unknown.

Champlain received the congregated host,
And his dark waves, beneath the sails, are lost;
St. Clair beholds, and, with his scanty train,
In firm retreat, o'er many a fatal plain,
Lures their Wild march. Wide moves their furious force,
Where flaming hamlets mark their wasting course;
Thro' pathless realms their spreading ranks are wheel'd
O'er Mohawk's western wave and Bennington's dread field;
Till, where deep Hudson's winding waters stray,
A yeoman host opposed their rapid way;
There on a towery height brave Gates arose,
Waved the blue steel and dared the headlong foes;
Undaunted Lincoln, moving at his side,
Urged the dread strife, and spread the squadrons wide;
Now roll, like winged storms, the lengthening lines,
The clarion thunders and the battle joins;
Thick flames, in vollied flashes, fill the air,

And echoing mountains give the noise of war;
The clouds rise reddening round the dreadful height,
And veil the skies and wrap the sounding fight.
Now, in the skirt of night, where thousands toil,
Ranks roll away and into light recoil;
The rout increases, all the British train
Tread back their steps and scatter o'er the plain;
To the glad holds precipitate retire,
And wide behind them streams the flashing fire.

Scarce moved the smoke above the gory height,
And oped the slaughter to the Hero's sight;
Back to their fate, when baffled squadrons flew,
Resumed their rage, and pour'd the strife anew;
Again the batteries roar, the lightnings play,
Again they fall, again they roll away.
And now Columbia, circling round the field,
Points her full force—the trembling thousands yield;
When bold Burgoyne, in one disastrous day,
Sees future crowns and former wreaths decay;
While two illustrious armies shade the plain,
The mighty victors and the captive train.[1]

Burgoyne's downfall threw the British wiseacres into bitter dismay and caused both sides to modify their views. New York was safe as was New England. Affairs of the revolutionists grew perceptibly brighter and the possible final achievement of independence loomed up not quite so hazy as only too long it had in the past. Franklin at the Court of Louis of France made no delay in urging anew his desire that an alliance would indeed be acceptable to his countrymen and we may rightly say that the capitulation at Saratoga was potent in hastening the

1. "The Vision of Columbus," 159-161.

conclusion of the convention at Paris in 1778 which, while it granted formal recognition to the United States by the government of France, insured also the active and avowed participation of French troops and ships toward the consummation so earnestly longed for.

Little wonder, then, if the verse of the hour failed not to concern itself with the victory at Stillwater. Out of many let us quote from one of twenty-one stanzas, entitled, "The Northern Campaign." Its author, it appears, is unknown.

Come unto me, ye heroes,
  Whose hearts are true and bold,
Who value more your honor
  Than others do their gold;
Give ear unto my story,
  And I the truth will tell
Concerning many a soldier
  Who for his country fell.

Burgoyne, the king's commander,
  From Canada set sail;
With full eight thousand reg'lars,
  He thought he could not fail;
With Indians and Canadians,
  And his cursed tory crew,
On board his fleet of shipping
  He up the Champlain flew.

Before Ticonderoga,
  The first day of July,
Appear'd his ships and army,
  And we did them espy,
Their motions we observed
  Full well both night and day,

And our brave boys prepared
To have a bloody fray.

To take the stores and cattle
That we had gathered then,
Burgoyne sent a detachment
Of fifteen hundred men;
By Baum they were commanded,
To Bennington they went;
To plunder and to murder
Was fully their intent.

But little did they know then
With whom they had to deal;
It was not quite so easy
Our stores and stock to steal;
Bold Stark would give them only
A portion of his *lead*:
With half his crew ere sunset
Baum lay among the dead.

The nineteenth of September,
The morning cool and clear,
Brave Gates rode through our army,
Each soldier's heart to cheer:
"Burgoyne," he cried, "advances,
But we will never fly;
No—rather than surrender,
We'll fight him till we die."

The news was quickly brought us,
The enemy was near,
And all along our lines then
There was no sign of fear;
It was above Stillwater
We met at noon that day,
And every one expected

To see a bloody fray.

. . . . . .

Now here's a health to Arnold,
And our commander Gates;[1]
To Lincoln and to Washington,
Whom ev'ry Tory hates;
Likewise unto our Congress,
God grant it long to reign,
Our country, Right and Justice
Forever to maintain.

Now finish'd is my story,
My song is at an end;
The freedom we're enjoying
We're ready to defend;
For while our cause is righteous,
Heaven nerves the soldier's arm,
And vain is their endeavor
Who strive to do us harm.[2]

In England there had always been a division of opinion and feeling in regard to the American question. Through all the years, frequent reference is made to America, at times disparaging and derogatory, again, in terms of genuine feeling in her behalf. In one poem entitled, "To Britain," published in a British journal[3] we read an appeal to the nation in these words:

1. General Horatio Gates was born in England but early joined in the colonists' cause. His ambition seems to have been to supersede Washington in the supreme command as he did Gen. Schuyler in command of the Northern Army shortly before the final action. The glory Gates won at Saratoga faded sadly with the disastrous southern campaign which he led subsequently. A splendid collection of Gates's papers may be seen in the library of the New York Historical Society.
2. See Stone's "Ballads," 86-93.
3. Say's "British Journal." Quoted in Moore, pp. 163-4

Blush Britain! blush at thy inglorious war,
This civil contest, this ignoble jar;
Think how unjustly you've begun the fray,
With cruel measures rous'd America.

To arms: each swain must leave the peaceful field,
And against his brethren lift the sword and shield;
Their spacious commerce, now in ruin lies,
And thro' their land the hostile standard flies.

Britain, what laurel canst thou hope to gain?
Can any action give a hero fame?
In brother's blood our soldiers' hands imbru'd
And barb'rous hostiles by our chiefs pursu'd.

Afflicting Britain, thus to spoil thy name,
Defeat's a scandal, conquest but a sham;
Our senators all lost in dire excess,
Lovers of pleasure, luxury, and dress.

Almighty ruler, stretch thy potent hand ,
And o'er Britannia wave the olive wand;
Preserve our nation from the impending fate,
Drive clouds of Scotchmen from the British state;
Fair peace descend, with all thy prosp'rous train,
And spread thy blessings o'er our spacious plain.

A finer poem,[1] breathing the very breath of the spirit of reconciliation, is the following, attributed by Sargent to Joseph Stansbury, a Tory:

When rival nations, great in arms,
Great in power, in glory great,
Fill the world with loud alarms,

1. See "Ode for the Year 1778" in "Loyal Verses," ed. by Winthrop Sargent, pp. 31-2. The poem, Sargent asserts, is "Printed from a contemporary manuscript."

And breathe a temporary hate:
The hostile storms but rage awhile,
And the tir'd contest ends.
But ah! how hard to reconcile
The foes who once were friends.

Each hasty word, each look unkind,
Each distant hint, that seems to mean
A something lurking in the mind
That almost longs to lurk unseen;
Each shadow of a shade offends
Th' embittered foes who once were friends.

That Pow'r made, who fram'd the Soul,
And bade the Springs of passion play
Can all their jarring strings control;
And form, on discord, concord's sway.
'Tis He alone, whose breath of love
Did o'er the world of waters move—
Whose touch the mountain bends—
Whose word from darkness call'd forth light;
'Tis He alone can reunite
The foes who once were friends.

To Him, O Britain! bow the knee—
His awful, his august decree,
Ye rebel tribes adore!
Forgive at once and be forgiven
Ope in each breast a little heaven;
And discord is no more!

The prospect of the French alliance proved a cause of marked perturbation of spirit on the part of the Tory element—a state of mind and temper reflected as usual in the papers of the time. Acknowledged independence for America seemed now a fact merely of patient expecta-

tion. Though the prospect of ultimate success stirred men's souls, it must have appeared to many, on second thought, that the sources of dissension were still only too clearly present and quickening. A Tory poem,[1] in five quatrains, appeared in the "Royal Gazette" at this time and poignantly indicated the strength of the spirit of those opposed to separation and independence. Here is one of the stanzas:

Though rebels unnumber'd oppose their career,
Their hearts are undaunted, they're strangers to fear,
No obstacles hinder; resistless they go,
And death and destruction attend every blow.

A glance at another side of the battle of words will reveal the fact that its supporting bards were in no respect idle and both in America and in England they were far from wanting. A fair piece of sarcastic raillery appeared in the "London Evening Post," afterwards to be republished in colonial papers. It bore the title, "The Halcyon Days of Old England," and came out in 1778. Here is its style:

Give ear to my song, I'll not tell you a story;
This is the bright era of Old England's glory!
And though some may think us in pitiful plight,
I'll swear they're mistaken, for matters go right!

Let us laugh at the cavils of weak, silly elves!
Our statesmen are wise men! they say so themselves,
And tho' little mortals may hear it with wonder,
'Tis consummate wisdom, that causes each blunder!

1. "British Light Infantry." See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 105-6.

They are now engaged in a glorious war!
It began about tea, about feathers and tar;
With spirit they push what they've planned with sense!
Forty millions they've spent, for a tax of three pence.

Tribute is frequently paid to the encouragement lent by the women during the years of struggle; for example, in a poem entitled, "Public Spirit of the Women":[1]

Could time be roll'd backward, and age become young,
My heart swell with ardor, my arm be new strung;
Under Washington's banner I'd cheerfully fight,
Where the smiles of the fair with glory unite.

And the poet indulges in a little retrospective desire:

Our patriot fair like a charm can inspire,
In three-score-and-ten, twenty's spirit and fire.

In another poem, we find these four lines:

God bless our gentle mothers, dear,
Who cheer us on our way!
God bless our loving sisters, dear,
Who with them at home stay.[2]

There was humor, too, in many of the events of those stirring years; humor, striking the parties to it somewhat differently at times. It seems that close to Philadelphia "infernal machines," evidently resembling kegs, were set floating on the Delaware by the Americans in the hope

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 200-2.
2. See below, pp. 171-72, for quotation from "Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed," William B. Reed, Philadelphia, 1847.

that upon contact with British shipping their explosion would cause no little havoc. The British appear to have done their best to destroy these floating "mines" by firing upon them at a distance—a proceeding which, according to the poem, "The Battle of the Kegs," by Francis Hopkinson, created no little amusement for the Americans alongshore. The poem is one of slight merit, but is spirited, ironical, and has that quality which would insure its wide circulation and popularity in a time such as that in which it was written. It is too long for quotation in full and the following stanzas shall suffice to give its general tenor:

Gallants attend and hear a friend
  Trill forth harmonious ditty,
Strange things I'll tell which late befell
  In Philadelphia City.

'Twas early day, as poets say,
  Just when the sun was rising,
A soldier stood on a log of wood,
  And saw a thing surprising.

As in amaze he stood to gaze,
  The truth can't be denied, sir,
He spied a score of kegs or more
  Come floating down the tide, sir.

. . . . . .

These kegs I'm told, the rebels bold,
  Pack'd up like pickling herring;
And they're come down t' attack the town;
  In this new way of ferrying.

Now up and down throughout the town,
  Most frantic scenes were acted;

And some ran here, and others there
  Like men almost distracted.

. . . . . .

"Arise, arise, Sir Erskine cries,
  The rebels—more's the pity,
Without a boat are all afloat,
  And rang'd before the City.

"The motley crew, in vessels new,
  With Satan for their guide, sir,
Pack'd up in bags or wooden kegs,
  Come driving down the tide, sir.

Therefore prepare for bloody war,
  These kegs must all be routed,
Or surely we despised shall be,
  And British courage doubted."

. . . . . .

The cannons roar from shore to shore,
  The small arms make a rattle;
Since wars began I'm sure no man
  E'er saw so strange a battle.

The rebel dales, the rebel vales,
  With rebel trees surrounded;
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
  With rebel echoes sounded.

The fish below swam to and fro,
  Attack'd from ev'ry quarter;
Why sure, thought they, the devil's to pay,
  'Mongst folks above the water.

. . . . . .

From morn to night these men of might
  Display'd amazing courage;
And when the sun was fairly down,
  Retir'd to sup their porrage.

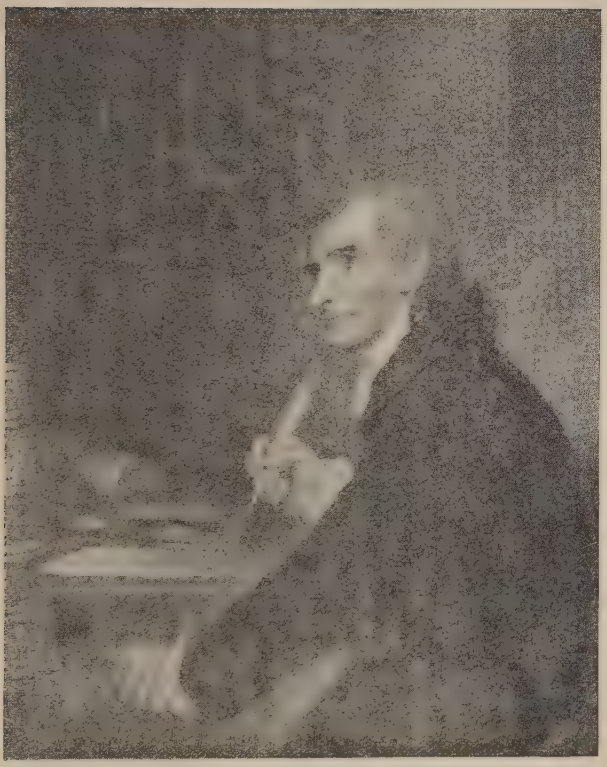
. . . . . .

Such feats did they perform that day,
Against these wick'd kegs, sir,
That years to come, if they get home,
They'll make their boasts and brags, sir.

It will be well here to give briefly the facts of Francis Hopkinson's career. We have already[1] suggested the place he holds as one of three of most importance among the poets of the Revolution, and have at several points[2] in our narrative cited poems and opinions which he expressed in the earlier years of the struggle. We have seen how he could find it possible to write a most laudatory ascription in verse to the second George and in similar vein to his successor. We have also noted[3] his change of attitude toward the sovereign whose crown jewels were loosening in their settings. He became "one of the prime wits of the Revolution, and may be ranked alongside of Trumbull for his efficiency in the cause."[4]

Francis Hopkinson was born in Philadelphia in 1737 and received his education at the University of Pennsylvania in its earliest class. Subsequently, he studied law. Early in the struggle Hopkinson lost his position as royal tax receiver through his adherence to the rebel cause. He was sent to the continental congress of 1776 and signed the Declaration of Independence as a delegate from New Jersey. He received appointment to a committee of three which had practical charge of naval affairs. In 1779, he was made judge of the admiralty of

1. P. 24 and p. 83.
2. Pp. 33, ff.
3. P. 35, ft.
4. Duyckinck: "Cyclopaedia of American Literature;" I, 219.



Francis Hopkinson

Pennsylvania, an office his father, Thomas Hopkinson, had previously held. President Washington made him judge of the district court in 1790, but he died in May of the following year. Besides his interests above detailed, Francis Hopkinson was a church warden and took a keen interest in church affairs. His tastes went out toward music and painting as well as to literary work. The poetry[1] of Judge Hopkinson dealt with a variety of subjects, though only those, of course, of patriotic theme are within our province and but two or three of these in addition to the verse already quoted. One piece pictures Britannia under the similitude of a forlorn and wretched woman who, meeting the poet, confides her story to him, her days of glory past, and she, the mother of a "long, illustrious line," living to reap the whirlwind of George's folly. It requires twenty-four quatrains to complete the picture, none of which we shall venture to quote. Better work is found in two of his ballads: "A Camp Ballad" in six quatrains and "The Toast" in three. Of the first of these, the opening stanza and the closing two are worth quoting:

Make room, oh! ye kingdoms in hist'ry renowned,
Whose arms have in battle with glory been crown'd,
Make room for America, another great nation,
Arises to claim in your council a station.

. . . . . .

To arms then, to arms, 'tis fair freedom invites us;
The trumpet shrill sounding to battle excites us;
The banners of virtue unfurl'd, shall wave o'er us,
Our hero lead on, and the foe fly before us.

---

1. In volume III, pp. 1-204, of "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings."

On Heav'n and Washington placing reliance,
We'll meet the bold Briton, and bid him defiance;
Our cause we'll support, for 'tis just and 'tis glorious
When men fight for freedom they must be victorious.

"The Toast" is spirited and "catchy," and we shall venture to quote it in full:

'Tis Washington's health—fill a bumper around,
For he is our glory and pride;
Our arms shall in battle with conquest be crown'd,
Whilst virtue and he's on our side.

'Tis Washington's health—and cannons should roar,
And trumpets the truth should proclaim;
There cannot be found, search the world all o'er,
His equal in virtue and fame.

'Tis Washington's health—our hero to bless,
May heav'n look graciously down;
Oh! long may he live our hearts to possess,
And freedom still call him her own.

To speak enthusiastically of Francis Hopkinson, the poet, is to court critical unreason. Greater in the statesman's vision he certainly was. Nevertheless, his verse served its turn and doubtless was most popular in the day of its appearing. "It may perhaps be said that the greatest praise which can justly be bestowed upon it, is that the versification is easy, but that the subjects upon which it was mostly employed, being generally occasional, it cannot afford much interest beyond the immediate circle acquainted with the facts."[1] "His poems were only in-

1. John Sanderson: "Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence:" Phila., 1822; II, 194-5.

tended to amuse, for a moment, the immediate circle of his acquaintance, and they were of sufficient merit to entitle them to that attention . . ." Thus was his work evaluated nearly a century ago and within the memory of men then still living, who had themselves fought on the fields of the Revolution and been cheered at the camp-fire by the poetry of the bards. His pen was, like Freneau's, the pen of a ready writer of satire and ridicule, but, as recent critics have noted, his work usually lacks the fiercer and more violently bitter element, rather contenting itself with the playful presentation of the humorous phase of current events and expressing the writer's patriotic devotion in a manner, while temperate, none the less real.

Over one hundred and twenty-five heroic couplets make up a poem by Philip Freneau, dated August, 1778, and bearing a title in keeping with its length and spirit—"America Independent, And Her Everlasting Deliverance from British Tyranny and Oppression."[1] In true epic fashion, the poet begins by expressing with greater fervor than self-depreciation the fact that only a heaven-inspired poet could "tell the conflicts of these stormy days!" We have, as usual in Freneau's work, the keen zest and fire, the extravagant excess of the over-heated emotional outburst. In the spirit, both in substance and in form, of the Declaration of Independence and the literature of the "age of reason," he exclaims:

> When God from Chaos gave this world to be
> Man then he formed, and formed him to be free.
> In his own image stampt the favourite race—
> How darest thou, tyrant, the fair stamp deface!

1. "Poems," I, 271-82.

When on mankind you fix your abject chains,
No more the image of that God remains.
O'er a dark scene a darker shade is drawn,
His work dishonoured, and our glory gone!

But alas! one cannot but recall that at the moment of writing, America still had men of color in the bondage of slavery.

Unmistakable meaning we find in the following lines on the king, in which may be seen Freneau's aptness in selecting the epithet that stings:

Kings are the choicest curse that man e'er knew!
. . . your prince, of all bad men the worst!

And then:

In him we see the depths of baseness joined;
Whate'er disgraced the dregs of human kind.
Cain, Nimrod, Nero—fiends in human guise,
Herod, Domitian—these in judgment rise,
And, envious of his deeds, I hear them say
None but a George could be more vile than they.

Cool satire marks these, too:

There, Loyals, there, with loyal hearts retire,
There pitch your tents, and kindle there your fire;
. . . . . .
And with yourselves let John Burgoyne retire
To reign the monarch, whom your hearts desire.

Freneau's French sympathy and leaning are noticeable as when, after telling of the war and the efforts of our own to prosecute it to a successful issue, he speaks of how

the aid from abroad quickened in the British Ministry the wholesome sense of loss about to ensue and tended toward the dispatch of Howe in 1778 with overtures of peace. Freneau speaks of this as a forlorn hope:

> Yet shall not all your base dissembling art
> Deceive the tortures of a bleeding heart—
> Yet shall not all your mingled prayers that rise
> Wash out your crimes, or bribe the avenging skies.

And he adds, alluding to the sad fate (discussed above, page 128) of Jane McCrea in central New York at the hands of the Indians, presumed by Americans of the period to have been inspired in their deed by the British:

> This deed alone our just revenge would claim,
> Did not ten thousand more your sons defame.

"America Independent" is tediously long, of course, notwithstanding its better lines and frequent bold and forceful touches. It ends, too, rather weakly, with little of climax where one would expect a grand flourish and greater culmination of effect. Perhaps, the finest lines in the whole work are the following, wherein the cumulative force of the first verse-paragraph is really effective:

> Far to the north, on Scotland's utmost end
> An isle there lies, the haunt of every friend,
> No shepherds there attend their bleating flocks,
> But withered witches rove among the rocks;
> Shrouded in ice, the blasted mountains show
> Their cloven heads, to daunt the seas below;
> The lamp of heaven in his dismal race
> There scarcely deigns to unveil his radiant face,
> Or if one day he circling treads the sky

He views this island with an angry eye,
Or ambient fogs their broad, moist wings expand,
Damp his bright ray, and cloud the infernal land;
The blackening winds incessant storms prolong,
Dull as their night, and dreary as my song;
Then from the dark sky drives the unpitying snow;
When drifting snows from iron clouds forbear,
Then down the hail-stones rattle through the air—
There screeching owls, and screaming vultures rest,
And not a tree adorns its barren breast;
No peace, no rest, the elements bestow,
But seas forever rage, and storms forever blow.
There, Loyals, there, with loyal hearts retire,
There pitch your tents, and kindle there your fire;
There desert Nature will her stings display,
And fiercest hunger on your vitals prey,
And with yourselves let John Burgoyne retire
To reign the monarch, whom your beasts admire.

That America was gratified over the friendly attitude of France may be seen in a slight but significant way in the naming of a newly launched frigate the "Alliance" in the first months of 1778. It was one of the earliest concerns of the Continental Congress to build up the naval arm of the service and therewith to harass and cripple British trade and shipping, humiliate the proud "mistress of the seas" and devote to the patriot cause the supplies and munitions of war secured through capture and reprisal on the seas. Many and brilliant were the exploits of the daring men who went down to the sea in ships and whose courageous and valorous deeds suffered no dimming in comparison with those of their brothers on the land. We hear little as a rule of these worthy salts; the fame of a very few such as John Paul Jones seems to have

cast that of others into shadow. Still, in their day, their heroism was known and extolled. Inland and coastal waters and foreign shores alike saw our ships and felt their power. Patriots and events were honored in the names they bore—Lexington, Hancock, Franklin, Trumbull, etc. Singularly successful they often proved and few, indeed, seem to have been those deeds which might dim their glory in our annals of the time and, to the last days of the conflict they continued alert and active.[1] The bards were proud of their accomplishment and sang their praises worthily. Later on, in Chapter IX, we shall discuss the victory, most memorable of all, off Flamborough Head. Suffice it here to quote Freneau's poem, "On the New American Frigate Alliance" which, as Professor Pattee[2] affirms, "was the only one of our navy, of the class of frigates, which escaped capture or destruction during the war. She was during the Revolution what "Old Ironsides" became in later years, the idol of the American people. She was in many engagements and was always victorious."

As Neptune traced the azure main
That owned, so late, proud Britain's reign,
A floating pile approached his car,
The scene of terror and of war.

As nearer still the monarch drew
(Her starry flag displayed to view)
He asked a Triton of his train
"What flag was this that rode the main?

1. See Maclay's "History of the Navy," I, 3-151.
2. "Poems," I, 285, ft.

"A ship of such a gallant mien
"This many a day I have not seen,
"To no mean power can she belong,
"So swift, so warlike, stout and strong.

"See how she mounts the foaming wave—
"Where other ships would find a grave,
"Majestic, aweful, and serene,
"She sails the ocean, like its queen"—

"Great monarch of the hoary deep,
"Whose trident awes the waves to sleep,
(Replied a Triton of his train)
"This ship, that stems the western main,

"To those new, rising States belongs,
"Who, in resentment of their wrongs,
"Oppose proud Britain's tyrant sway,
"And combat her, by land and sea.

"This pile, of such superior fame,
"From their strict union takes her name,
"For them she cleaves the briny tide,
"While terror marches by her side.

"When she unfurls her flowing sails,
"Undaunted by the fiercest gales,
"In dreadful pomp, she ploughs the main,
"While adverse tempests rage in vain.

"When she displays her gloomy tier,
"The boldest foes congeal with fear,
"And, owning her superior might,
"Seek their best safety in their flight.

"But when she pours the dreadful blaze,
"And thunder from her cannon plays,

"The bursting flash that wings the ball,
"Compels those foes to strike or fall.

"Though she, with her triumphant crew,
"Might to their fate all foes pursue,
"Yet, faithful to the land that bore,
"She stays, to guard her native shore.

"Though she might make the cruisers groan
"That sail within the torrid zone,
"She kindly lends a nearer aid,
"Annoys them here, and guards the trade.

"Now, traversing the eastern main,
"She greets the shores of France and Spain;
"Her gallant flag, displayed to view,
"Invites the old world to the new.

"This task achieved, behold her go
"To seas congealed with ice and snow,
"To either tropic, and the line,
"Where suns with endless fervour shine.

"Not, Argo, on thy decks were found
"Such hearts of brass, as here abound;
"They for their golden fleece did fly,
"These sail—to vanquish tyranny."

PART III

FROM THE TREATY OF ALLIANCE TO THE PEACE OF 1783

CHAPTER IX

THE OLIVE BRANCH AND WAR OVERSEA

General character of closing years—"A Form of Prayer"—Freneau, Barlow and Trumbull—Three poems by Freneau—Rev. Wheeler Case—his "Answer for the Messengers of the Nation"—"The Dutch Song"—War on the seas—John Paul Jones—"The Yankee Man-of-War"—Freneau, again—"Captain Jones's Invitation"—"On the Memorable Victory"—Loyal verse—Rev. Jonathan Odell—"The Feu de Joie"—"The American Times"—"The Word of Congress"—Rev. John Wesley's "Hymn"—A savage attack in verse on the Loyalists.

THE writings of the period following the treaty with France—the four or five years before the final peace of Paris, the three before the fall of Yorktown—were characterized like those of previous years by sharp thrusts of ridicule, invective and satire. It is noticeable, that little abatement appears on the part of those who have all along manifested an interest in the conflict and its outcome. The loyalists are loyal still, the patriots determined as ever in the past, and the kinsmen across the seas, as before, divided in their sympathies. On this last phase of the whole matter may be noted the title of an interesting pamphlet which was published in London in 1778, "By His Majesty's Special Command," and offered to the people, "A Form of Prayer, to be used in all the Churches and Chapels throughout that Part of Great

Britain, called England, etc . . . upon Friday, the Twenty-Fourth of February next, being the Day appointed by Proclamation for a General Fast and Humiliation before Almighty God, for obtaining Pardon for Our Sins, and for Averting those heavy Judgments, which our manifold Provocations have most justly deserved; and imploring His Blessing and Assistance on the Arms of His Majesty by Sea and Land, and for restoring and perpetuating Peace, Safety, and Prosperity to Himself, and to His Kingdoms." One petition, as it has been pointed out, is of interest in particular, invoking the Divine aid to "restore tranquility among His [Majesty's] deluded subjects in America."

By far the most voluminous and, as volume must always be a thing of value in our appreciation of the verse of the time, by far the most important work was contributed by Philip Freneau, though the effort of others was in less degree also great,—especially, that of Joel Barlow[1] whose *opus magnum*, "The Columbiad," was conceived during these years and that of John Trumbull[2] who produced in 1782 his completed "M'Fingal." Freneau's, however, was an almost untiring pen. The patriot poets, known and unknown, are of apiece with their precursors or their own earlier selves—noting down events as they occur, pillorying individuals like Benedict Arnold, poking fun at others like Cornwallis; sympathetic, too, with unfortunates such as Andre, and glorifying, as usual, the heroes of their choice.

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1. See p. 66.
2. See pp. 83, ff.

Three poems by Freneau will serve to indicate something of the feeling met with at the time by the King's ministers and the futility awaiting their efforts to reëstablish peace after Burgoyne's defeat and the treaty with France; the belief of some of the patriots (how widespread, it is of course quite impossible to determine) as to the supposedly real attitude of the British toward the Tories; and the hostility in England toward the government's position throughout the struggle, particularly in the minds of men like Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox.

"George the Third's Soliloquy" appeared[1] in "The United States Magazine," and is quite lengthy, consisting of between forty and fifty heroic couplets. Its meaning is twofold, suggesting the confidence of the patriots and the possible state of the royal mind on receipt of the discouraging news from Saratoga and the Court of France. Mourns the king:

> My hopes and joys are vanished with my coin,
> My ruined army and my lost Burgoyne!
> What shall I do—confess my labours vain,
> Or whet my tusks, and to the charge again!"

The poem, "Sir Harry's Invitation,"[2] refers to the treatment, presumed or otherwise, by Sir Henry Clinton of the Tory refugees on his taking command at New York in the summer of 1777 and is quoted here to evidence the lingering feeling, deep in Freneau, toward them. It is a sarcastic ballad in four stanzas, the first and third of which will afford a taste of its flavor:

1. May, 1779. See "Poems;" II, 3-6.
2. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

Come, gentlemen Tories, firm, loyal and true,
Here are axes and shovels, and something to do!
For the sake of our king,
Come, labour and sing;
You left all you had for his honour and glory;
And he will remember the suffering Tory:
We have, it is true,
Some small work to do;
But here's for your pay
Twelve coppers a day,
And never regard what the rebels may say,
But throw off your jerkins and labour away.
. . . . . .
Attend at the call of the fifer and drummer,
The French and the Rebels are coming next summer,
And forts we must build
Though Tories are kill'd—
Then courage, my jockies, and work for your king,
For if you are taken no doubt you will swing
If York we can hold
I'll have you enroll'd;
And after you're dead
Your names shall be read
As who for their monarch both labour'd and bled,
And ventur'd their necks for their beef and their bread.

A third poem, "A Dialogue between His Britannic Majesty and Mr. Fox,"[1] is over one hundred and twenty-five couplets in length and appeared in the "United States Magazine" in the last month of 1779. It gives the supposed impression made in England by Burgoyne's failure in New York, with Stony Point and other events suggested or dwelt upon. Opposition to the program outlined by the ministry was still rife and the author is lavish in such epi-

1. "Poems;" II, 9-18.

thets as "a royal coward fills Britannia's throne," "a very idiot grown." Fox is made to intimate to the king the true course he should follow and the inevitable outcome of the conflict. The king opens the conversation with:

Good master Fox, your counsel I implore,
Still George the third, but potent George no more.
By North conducted to the brink of fate,
I mourn my folly and my pride too late:
The promises he made, when once we met
In Kew's gay shades, I never shall forget,
That at my feet the western world should fall,
And bow to me the potent lord of all—
Curse on his hopes, his councils and his schemes,
His plans of conquest, and his golden dreams.

To which Fox replies:

While in the arms of power and peace you lay,
Ambition led your restless soul astray.
Possessed of lands extending far and wide,
And more than Rome could boast in all her pride,
Yet, not contented with that mighty store,
Like a true miser, still you sought for more;
And, all in raptures for a tyrant's reign,
You strove your subjects' dearest rights to chain.

He goes on to state the case and the present position of the king before the colonies. His final words include this advice:

Implore the friendship of these injur'd States,
No longer strive against the stubborn fates,
Since heaven has doomed Columbia to be free,
What is her commerce and her wealth to thee!
Since heav'n that land of promise has denied,
Regain by prudence what you lost by pride.

Another poet, one of the many obscure, though not therefore less pronounced in opinion or in feeling, may be cited and his work quoted in this connection. A minor bard was the Reverend Wheeler Case[1] whose entire work, though small in quantity and slight in intrinsic value, should not be passed over in a study such as ours for we have therein the clerical viewpoint no less pronounced than the lay itself. The years of strife, indeed, witnessed sermons not a few and prayers, too, delivered and offered up before the God of battles. "An Answer for the Messengers of the Nation" hardly needs further comment: its author's feeling on the question of peace is evident enough. It is worth while, however, to mention the fact that the work is something of a verse-sermon based on a text from Isaiah, the thirty-second verse of the fourteenth chapter: "What shall one then answer the Messengers of the Nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it."

When Messengers come from a foreign land,
With peaceful branch of olive in their hand,
If heart and hand unite, if both agree,
From ill designs and all suspicion free,
We'll then receive them in the arms of love;
They are not *men*, but *angels* from above:
Blessings like show'rs will on their souls descend;
They're blessed in life, and blessed in their end;
Peace like a river ne'er will cease to flow
Thro' all their souls, while strangers here below,
When they have done their work of peace and love,
They'll then arise to mansions far above.

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1. See p. 124.
2. "Revolutionary Memorials, embracing Poems," p. 40.

What e'er these heavenly messengers request,
We'll surely grant to them, for it is best.
What terms of peace they offer we'll receive,
Such beings can't oppress, they will relieve;
They'll hush the war to peace, they'll heal debates,
And then declare us independent States.
Our burdens they'll remove, our wrongs redress,
Such characters as these can do no less.
But if a diff'rent character they bear,
And from the British court are come t' ensnare,
If they'd the yoke of bondage take away,
Lay it aside until a future day,
When time and season serve, they best will know,
Then send their plagues with a redoubled woe.
If they have in view, we'll tell them then,
They are not angels, but designing men.
A fuller answer in my Text is given,
It must be just, as it was sent from heaven.
The Lord hath founded *Zion,* God the Just,
In him his poor may safely put their trust.

. . . . . .

Oppression drove our fathers to this land,
They all were guided by Jehovah's hand:
Unto these pious souls, these heirs of heaven,
Two eagle wings now from on high were given;
They put their trust in GOD, on him depend,
They spread their wings and flew before the wind.

We shall not pass to active strife without notice of "The Dutch Song," a poem in ten stanzas, reminding one of the metre of our national anthem, "America," and appearing in the "Pennsylvania Packet" of Philadelphia, in 1779. In part, as follows:

God save the Thirteen States!
Long rule th' United States!
God save our States!

Make us victorious;
Happy and glorious;
No tyrants over us;
  God save our States!

. . . . . .

To our fam'd Washington,
Brave Stark at Bennington,
  Glory is due.
Peace to Montgomery's shade,
Who as he fought and bled,
Drew honors round his head,
  Num'rous as true.

. . . . . .

Come join your hands to ours;
No royal blocks, no tow'rs;
  God save us all!
Thus in our country's cause,
And to support our laws;
Our swords shall never pause
  At Freedom's call.

. . . . . .

O Lord! thy gifts in store,
We pray on Congress pour,
  To guide our States.
May union bless our land,
While we, with heart and hand;
Our mutual rights defend,
  God save our States!

. . . . . .

God save the Thirteen States!
Long watch the prosp'rous fates
  Over our States!
Make us victorious;
Happy and glorious;
No tyrants over us
  God save our States.

The splendid victory of John Paul Jones over the British off Flamborough Head on the glorious evening of September 23, 1779, justly filled Americans with pride and was the occasion for many a literary outburst. One poem, "The Yankee Man-of-War,"[1] is a rather stirring sea-ballad, suggestive of its element and, as compared with much of the dreary waste of verse, far from meritless:

'Tis of a gallant Yankee ship that flew the stripes and stars,
And the whistling wind from the west-nor'-west blew through the pitch-pine spars;
With her starboard tacks aboard, my boys, she hung upon the gale;
On an autumn night we raised the light on the old Head of Kinsale.

It was a clear and cloudless night, and the wind blew steady and strong,
As gayly over the sparkling deep our good ship bowled along;
With the foaming seas beneath her bow the fiery waves she spread,
And bending low her bosom of snow, she buried her lee cat-head.

There was no talk of short'ning sail by him who walked the poop,
And under the press of her pond'ring jib, the boom bent like a hoop!
And the groaning water-ways told the strain that held her stout main-tack,
But he only laughed as he glanced aloft at a white and silvery track.

1. Author unknown. See Stedman's "Anthology," pp. 8-9.

The mid-tide meets in the Channel waves that flow from
shore to shore,
And the mist hung heavy upon the land from Feather-
stone to Dunmore,
And that sterling light in Tusker Rock where the old
bell tolls each hour,
And the beacon light that shone so bright was quench'd
on Waterford Tower.

What looms upon our starboard bow? What hangs upon
the breeze?
'Tis time our good ship hauled her wind abreast the old
Saltees,
For by her ponderous press of sail and by her consorts four
We saw our morning visitor was a British man-of-war.

Up spake our noble Captain then, as a shot ahead of us
past—
"Haul snug your flowing courses! lay your topsail to the
mast!"
Those Englishmen gave three loud hurrahs from the deck
of their covered ark,
And we answered back by a solid broadside from the
decks of our patriot bark.

"Out booms! out booms!" our shipper cried, "out booms
and give her sheet,"
And the swiftest keel that was ever launched shot ahead
of the British fleet,
And midst a thundering shower of shot with stern-sails
hoisting away,
Down the North Channel Paul Jones did steer just at the
break of day.

The victory of John Paul Jones was the first really great event in American naval annals. We have not yet ceased to tell of this exploit or to sing the praises of the

victor. In a poem entitled, "Captain Jones' Invitation,"[1] Freneau refers to the difficulty the commander experienced in securing his crew, a work which required several months and much entreaty. The recurring motive, "to the sea," is pleasing and suggestive, and there are ten six-line stanzas, marred at times by imperfect rhyme but, on the whole, rather worthy. Here are three of them:

Thou, who on some dark mountain's brow
Hast toil'd thy life away till now,
And often from that rugged steep
Beheld the vast extended deep,
Come from thy forest, and with me
Learn what it is to go to sea.

There endless plains the eye surveys
As far from land the vessel strays;
No longer hill or dale is seen,
The realms of death intrude between,
But fear no ill; resolve, with me
To share the dangers of the sea.

But look not there for verdant fields—
Far different prospects Neptune yields;
Green seas shall only greet the eye,
Those seas encircled by the sky,
Immense and deep—come then with me
And view the wonders of the sea.

Yet sometimes groves and meadows gay
Delight the seamen on their way;
From the deep seas that round us swell
With rocks the surges to repel
Some verdant isle, by waves embrac'd,
Swells, to adorn the wat'ry waste.

1. "Poems," p. 288.

Though now this vast expanse appear
With glassy surface, calm and clear;
Be not deceiv'd—'tis but a show,
For many a corpse is laid below—
Even Britain's lads—it cannot be—
They were the masters of the sea.

Now combating upon the brine,
Where ships in flaming squadrons join,
At every blast the brave expire
'Midst clouds of smoke, and streams of fire;
But scorn all fear; advance with me—
'Tis but the custom of the sea.

Now we the peaceful wave divide,
On broken surges now we ride,
Now every eye dissolves with woe
As on some leeward coast we go—
Half lost, half buried in the main
Hope scarcely beams on life again.

Above us storms distract the sky,
Beneath us depths unfathom'd lie,
Too near we see, a ghastly sight,
The realms of everlasting night,
A wat'ry tomb of ocean green
And only one frail plank between!

But winds must cease, and storms decay,
Not always lasts the gloomy day,
Again the skies are warm and clear,
Again soft zephyrs fan the air,
Again we find the long lost shore,
The winds oppose our wish no more.

If thou hast courage to despise
The various changes of the skies,

To disregard the ocean's rage,
Unmov'd when hostile ships engage,
Come from thy forest, and with me
Learn what it is to go to sea.

Two years later,[1] Freneau published in Francis Bailey's "Freeman's Journal" another poem commemorative of the same event, entitled, "On the Memorable Victory Obtained by the gallant Captain Paul Jones, of the 'Good Man Richard,' over the 'Serapis,' etc., under the command of Captain Pearson." It is decidedly inferior to much of the author's work, not in any sense poetic, merely twenty-one six-line stanzas, labored and strained in thought and expression. Not a word is there in any line suggestive of the glories, as tradition has it, of the sky and the sea on that night of battle, the twenty-third of September, 1779. We hear an echo of Tom Paine in the eleventh stanza:

But thou, brave Jones, no blame shalt bear;
The rights of man demand thy care;

By far the finest of the stanzas are the concluding two wherein is exemplified Freneau's ability in the use of apostrophe and allusion. The poet advises:

Go on, great man, to daunt the foe,
And bid the haughty Britons know
  They to our Thirteen Stars shall bend;
The stars that, veil'd in dark attire,
Long glimmer'd with a feeble fire,
  But radiant now ascend;

1. August, 1781. "Poems;" II, 75-80. "The first poem contributed by Freneau to the Freeman's Journal. It appeared August 8, 1781." (Pattee).

Bend to the Stars that flaming rise—
In western, not in eastern, skies,
  Fair Freedom's reign restor'd.
So when the Magi, come from far,
Beheld the God-attending Star,
  They trembled and ador'd.

Loyalists, too, showed their spirit on occasion as we see in many a ballad and line issued from the loyal press of the land. In Rivington's "Royal Gazette,"[1] for example, there appeared a poem attributed[2] to the Reverend Doctor Odell,[3] entitled "The Feu de Joie: a Poem," and running on for nearly two long columns. It is a jubilant piece expressing the joy felt in New York over the success of the king's arms in the South. Here are the closing lines:

Let songs of triumph every voice employ,
And every muse discharge a feu de joie!
Ye poor deluded owners of the soil,
For others' good who labour and who toil—
Ye wretches doom'd to sorrowful mistakes,
Who hunger and who thirst for Congress' sake—
Arouse for shame: like men your rights resume,
And send your tyrants to the land of gloom.
If shame prevail not, still let wisdom plead,
If both are slighted, vengeance must succeed.
Your parent state grows stronger every hour;
As yet, its mercy far exceeds its power.
Your Congress every moment weaker grows;
Rags are its treasure: honest men, its foes.

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1. November 24, 1779.
2. By Winthrop Sargent in "Loyal Verses," though one finds no name subscribed in the "Royal Gazette."
3. See pp. 111, ff.

JONATHAN ODELL

Its building cracks, tho' buttress'd by the Gaul;
It nods; it shakes, it totters to its fall.
O save yourselves before it is too late!
O save your country from impending fate!
Leave those whom justice must at length destroy,
Repent, come over, and partake our joy.

Of all the Tory poets the Reverend Jonathan Odell[1] was unquestionably the most important, if length of words and sternness thereof are counted in his favor. In his "The American Times," the whole rebel-band of generals come before him to meet ruthless slaughter by his pen. It is a poem of about nine hundred lines and was written toward the close of the war. A quotation will suggest its quality. After paying his respects to Adams, Wayne, and others, the reverend loyalist apostrophizes Washington:

Was it ambition, vanity, or spite,
That prompted thee with Congress to unite;
Or did all three within thy bosom roll,
"Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul"?
Go, wretched author of thy country's grief,
Patron of villainy, of villains chief.

In another work by Odell, "The Word of Congress," printed in Rivington's "Royal Gazette" in 1779, we find these lines on the Reverend George Duffield, a chaplain of Congress, and incidentally on that body itself:

A Saint of old, as learned monks have said,
Preach'd to the Fish—the Fish his voice obey'd.
The same good man conven'd the grunting herd,
Who bow'd obedient to his pow'rful word.

1. See pp. 112-13 for biographical comment.

Such energy had truth, in days of yore;
Falsehood and nonsense, in our days, have more.
. . . . . .
It pleas'd Saint Anthony to preach to brutes;
To preach to Devils best with Duffield suits.

A poem, reputed to be by the Reverend John Wesley, dated late in the struggle and entitled, "Hymn for the Loyal Americans," is worthy a place:

Father of everlasting love,
The only refuge of despair,
. . . . . .
The men who dared their King revere,
And faithful to their Oaths abide,
Midst perjur'd Hypocrites sincere,
Harass'd, oppress'd on every side;
Gaul'd by the Tyrant's iron yoke,
By Britain's faithless sons forsook,
. . . . . .
As sheep appointed to be slain,
The victims of fidelity,
To man they look for help in vain;
But shall they look in vain to Thee,
God over all, who canst subdue
The hearts which mercy never knew?

Those who favored the king, however, were, indeed, sore let and hindered in the course they were pursuing. This is apparent not alone from the harsh laws passed and executed but from some of the verse that appeared from time to time. The year after the treaty of alliance, a savage attack upon them was published[1] in Philadelphia,

1. "The Loyalists," Anon., in "The United States Magazine," July, 1779.

pleading for their banishment. For "they are from Satan's den" and the only way open to the patriots is to "blast them to the shades below."

When Britain homeward calls her humbled train,
Say shall our traitors in these lands remain,
Who now, even now, assail your roofs with fire,
And captive lead the children and the fire?

. . . . . .

Ah no, expel them from the ravag'd shore;
Far, far remove them to return no more.
To scorch'd Bahama let the traitors go,
With grief and rage and unremitting woe;
On burning sands to walk their painful round,
And sigh thro' all the solitary ground,
Where no gay flower their haggard eyes may see,
And find no shade but from the cypress tree.

CHAPTER X

1780

Charleston and Camden—The patriotic women—their efforts—the bards thereon—"Our Women"—Discovery of the treachery of Benedict Arnold—the traitor's early life and service—at Philadelphia—his conduct there—the reprimand—negotiations with Clinton—Major John Andre's mission—its failure—Major Tallmadge—Andre's trial and execution as a spy—Wide interest in the treason episode—the three captors—character of Andre—"Monody" by Miss Seward—Freneau's "The Spy"—execration visited upon Arnold—"Arnold's Departure"—the traitor's later life.

British prison-ships—Freneau's experience—the hospital-ships—"The British Prison Ships" by Freneau—David Humphreys's lines—what authorities have to say on these ships.

The war in the South—Cornwallis—Greene—Marion, Sumter, and Pickens.

THE year, 1780, was of all the later years of the Revolution by far the most discouraging. Only strong, brave hearts could bear up under the trying difficulties, military and financial, which beset them on every side. Clinton had begun operations in the Carolinas in the hope of eventually destroying the patriot cause in the South. Lincoln held Charleston but overwhelming

odds soon forced his surrender and the capture of his army of over two thousand. Later, at Camden, General Gates, of Saratoga fame, suffered a humiliating defeat hardly less disastrous than Lincoln's at Charleston. Later still, the startling revelation of base deceit and wicked treachery stirred men to the depths. But before passing to the treason episode let us pause to note the splendid activity of the patriotic women in their very practical work in the army's behalf. There were, as we have noted, women in the colonies who took up their pens in the cause their brothers were fighting for but there were other women who rendered even more valuable aid with their needles and evidenced that tireless energy which is born of devotion.

An interesting account of the encouraging efforts of Philadelphia's womanhood will be found in volume two of the life of General Joseph Reed, president of the executive counsel of Pennsylvania. The ladies of Pennsylvania and New Jersey laid plans to raise by voluntary subscription supplies in money and clothing sufficient for the needs of Washington's army. Mrs. Reed, wife of General Reed, headed the ladies' association and had performed her service with energy and success when she died in the midst of her labor. She was succeeded by Mrs. Sarah Bache, daughter of Benjamin Franklin. In a letter to Washington, dated July 4, 1780, Mrs. Reed wrote: "The amount of the subscription is 200,680 dollars, and £625 6s. 8d. in specie, which makes in the whole in paper money 300,634 dollars." Allowing for the very great depreciation of the currency at the time, one cannot but be impressed with the results as set forth. There were over

1600 contributors and "all ranks of society seem to have united," the Marchioness of Lafayette giving "one hundred guineas in specie." At Washington's suggestion the money was spent for material out of which the ladies promised to make over two thousand shirts for the soldiers. Mrs. Bache graciously writing the commander-in-chief the day after Christmas: "We wish them to be worn with as much pleasure as they were made," and Washington could hardly appear in better light than in his letter of acknowledgment of the 13th of the following February: "The army ought not to regret their sacrifices or sufferings, when they meet with so flattering a reward as the sympathy of your sex; nor can they fear that their interests will be neglected, while espoused by advocates as powerful as they are amiable. I can only answer to the sentiments, which you do me the honour to express for me personally, that they would more than repay a life devoted to the service of the public and to testimonies of gratitude to yourselves."

Such service was not unrecognized by the bards for as we have learned[1] their voices were raised not infrequently in praise of devotion signally expressed. Witness the following lines from a poem entitled, "Our Women":

And now ye sister angels of each state,
Their honest bosoms glow with joy elate,
Their gallant hearts with gratitude expand
And trebly feel the bounties of your hand.

And wing'd for you their benedictions rise,
Warm from the soul and grateful to the skies!

1. See p. 137.

Nor theirs alone th' historian patriots fir'd,
Shall bless the generous virtue you've inspir'd.

Invent new epithet to warm their page,
And bid you live admired from age to age;
With sweet applauses dwell on every name,
Endear your memories and embalm your fame,

And thus the future bards shall soar sublime,
And waft you glorious down the streams of time;
The breeze of panegyric fill each sail,
And plaudits pure perfume the increasing gale.

Then freedom's ensign thus inscribed shall wave,
"The patriot females who their country save";
Till time's abyss absorb'd in heavenly lays
Shall flow in your eternity of praise.[1]

In September, the entire country was stirred by the thwarting of one of the most careful of plans vengefully to surrender a fortification to the enemy. Hardly could any event move men in a more peculiarly solemn way. Valued and valiant fighter in the patriot cause, notable alike for his daring and ability, Benedict Arnold revealed himself in a manner hitherto undreamed of. His earlier exploits at Quebec, at Valcour Island, and at Bemis's Heights had displayed a heroism which made him a trusted companion-in-arms and would have passed his name on to later times, honored and treasured with Washington's and Greene's.

Arnold was a native of Norwich, Connecticut, and now in the very prime of life. His earlier manhood saw him

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," pp. 296-298. There are ten stanzas in all, of which those quoted are the latter five.

a drug clerk but the appeal to arms in 1775 brought him to Cambridge and the side of the newly appointed commander-in-chief. His bold tactics on the field and his fidelity to the cause had won for him the confidence of his chief. Wounded during the closing actions of the Burgoyne campaign, Arnold had been relieved of active duty and placed in command of Philadelphia the following year, 1778, upon the evacuation of that city by the British. There his conduct was hardly above censure, ill-befitting an officer of his rank, and reckless of his own and of his country's interest. His presence as host or guest at dinner with those either unsympathetic or hostile to the country he served was naturally heralded as more than indiscreet. His marriage to a young woman of Tory family, while a private affair, was nevertheless symptomatic of a change of heart. An official reprimand was finally ordered by Congress and was in due course administered by General Washington. Arnold's temperamental weakness soon showed itself. It has been urged in extenuation of his future action that he had been the victim of unwarranted treatment on the part of Congress, not receiving at its hands the rewards which were his due for valiant service and zealous devotion. The honorable thing to do would have been what others did from time to time in somewhat similarly trying circumstances—to resign his commission and seek vindication at the bar of public opinion. As it was, Arnold took the most unwise of possible courses for almost immediately he turned to the dark and subterranean channels of illicit communication with the enemy, intriguing with Clinton, the British commander at New York, and bargaining for gold and

an army commission to surrender the fortification at West Point so great in strategic importance and to which command Arnold had been assigned.

In the late summer of 1780 negotiations had been underway long enough to bring them shortly to an end when all should be in readiness for the pacific yielding of the stronghold. A young adjutant-general in the king's service, Major John Andre, who had been Arnold's correspondent, was dispatched personally to interview the American general and to receive from his hand the all-important papers—plans and specifications of inestimable worth—which would lend the confidence desired to any expedition of feigned attack upon West Point. Andre had ascended the Hudson on board the "Vulture" but his return was, unexpectedly, by land for the warship had been obliged to drop down-stream because of the hostile attitude of American gunners along the shore. It was on this journey back and in disguise that the young officer was hailed and stopped on the road near Tarrytown by three patriot soldiers who, on searching him, disclosed his true character. Military trial followed his removal first to West Point and then to headquarters at Tappan, some thirty miles south. It is interesting in passing to mention the fact that the American in charge of the party conducting Andre to Tappan was a Major Tallmadge, a classmate of Nathan Hale at Yale.[1] The trial of the young spy, for so his status was interpreted, resulted in a recommendation that

1. For an account of this, Andre's last journey, see Abbatt: "The Crisis of the Revolution," p. 54, and the published memoir of Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge, pp. 132-138, edited by Professor H. P. Johnston, in 1904, for the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in New York.

he be hanged, a verdict which Washington confirmed and ordered, finally, put into effect on the second of October. Arnold made good his escape none too soon and entered into the British service wherein he secured for himself and his name all the obloquy and scorn which have since been associated therewith in American annals.

The tragic episode of Andre and Arnold has been given the space in this chapter in such proportion as it has assumed since in the public mind. Washington himself seems to have been touched by the fate of the young adjutant even though he thought it unwise to reverse the judgment of the court. The three plain militiamen, Andre's captors, were recipients of honors and rewards at the hands of Congress and have not since been forgotten. To the president of congress Washington himself reported under date of September 26, 1780: "I have now the pleasure to communicate the names of the three persons who captured Major Andre, and who refused to release him, notwithstanding the most earnest importunities and assurances of a liberal reward on his part. Their names are, John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Van Wart."[1]

To the extent that Arnold's name has been execrated Andre's has been remembered with pity. Major Tallmadge could write. "I will . . . remark, that for the few days of intimate intercourse I had with him, which was from the time of his being brought back to our head-quarters to the day of his execution, I became so deeply attached to Major Andre, that I can remember no instance

1. See "Writings of George Washington," ed. by W. C. Ford.

where my affections were so fully absorbed in any man."[1] A young lady in England, Miss Anna Seward, who seems to have been a friend of Andre's family and to have been much attached to the young man himself, composed what she entitled, "A Monody," and published in nearly two hundred couplets. Her estimate of General Washington for his condemnation of her friend follows:

O Washington! I thought thee great and good,
Nor knew thy Nero-thirst of guiltless blood!
Severe to use the pow'r that Fortune gave,
Thou cool determin'd Murderer of the Brave!
. . . . . .
Remorseless Washington! the day shall come
Of deep repentance for this barb'rous doom!
When injur'd Andre's memory shall inspire
A kindling Army with resistless fire;
Each falchion sharpen that the Britons wield,
And lead their fiercest Lion to the field!
Then, when each hope of thine shall set in night,
When dubious dread, and unavailing flight
Impel your Host, thy guilt-upbraided Soul
Shall wish untouch'd the sacred Life you stole!
And why thy Heart appall'd, and vanquish'd Pride
Shall vainly ask the mercy they deny'd,
With horror shalt thou meet the fate they gave,
Nor Pity gild the darkness of thy grave!
For Infancy, with livid hand, shall shed
Eternal mildew on the ruthless head![2]

Freneau expressed himself upon the whole affair in several poems. An unfinished dramatic piece entitled, "The

1. "Memoir," p. 57.
2. See vol. II, pp. 68-88, of Miss Seward's collected works.

Spy," we shall take up first.[1] There are three acts—eight scenes—and the cast includes with others, Sir Henry Clinton, Major Andre, Arnold, and two female characters, Lucinda and Amelia. The work is in blank verse and prose and would not lead any one to regret that its author never finished it. In the opening scene laid at West Point, two servants at their work in a garden discuss such signs of the times as: Tory plans, Arnold's sneers at his brother officers, etc. Another scene is taken up with an interview at New York between Sir Henry and the young adjutant. Freneau pays his respects to Arnold in these words of Andre:

> O Britain, Britain,
> That one descended from thy true-born sons
> Should plot against the soil that gave him birth,
> And for the value of a little gold
> Betray its dearest rights.
> But Traitors are the growth of every country
> And Arnold is our own!

In Act II, Scene I, Arnold thus soliloquizes:

> This is the time for dark and dangerous action;
> This is the time that thieves and murderers choose
> To execute their desperate designs.
> But art thou, Arnold, less than murderer,
> Who thus prepare to stab thy bleeding country?
> And can I then descend to be a traitor!
> By honest toils a name have I acquired,
> Great and unequalled in the rolls of fame;
> And shall that name to infamy be doomed
> By one base act that mars and cankers all?

1. "Poems," II, 39-72.

Thus debating and philosophizing, he comes to a decision and remarks:

> Born were we all, subjected to a king
> And that subjection must return again.
> The people are not dull republicans;
> By nature they incline to monarchy.
> How glorious should I be to have a share
> In bringing back my country to allegiance.
> Can France uphold them in their proud demand,
> That race of puny, base, perfidious dogs?
> Sooner shall all the house of Bourbon sink
> Their Rochambault, D'Estang and La Fayette,
> And Spain confederate cease to be a nation,
> And all their allies dwindle into atoms,
> Ere Britain will withdraw her righteous claim
> Or yield a jot her dominion here
> To any people living. Then, Andre, come,
> The sooner Britain gains this fort the better.

The second scene of Act II is a parlor scene in prose, wherein Major Andre and Lucinda hold their last conversation and heart and spirit of the ill-fated young officer are cheered by the melody of the loved one's song—five eight-line stanzas all informing us of an Englishman's loyalty and sense of duty and closing with a prophetic word of the fate to be. After singing to please her lover, Lucinda sings to please herself. Her song of four quatrains in amphibrachs, suggestive of Thomas Moore, is wholly prophetic and Andre quite clearly perceives its meaning. At the entrance of Sir Henry Clinton the young lady withdraws, not to appear again save for a moment's parting at the close of the act.

The young major is given his orders, "on an eagle's

wings to Arnold haste," and besides the main object of his mission, secure, if possible, the apprehension of "the great Americ chief."

> He is the soul,
> The great upholder of this long contention.
> I dread his prudence and his courage more
> Than all the armies that the Congress raise,
> Than all the troops or all the ships of France.

Act III of "The Spy" need not be dealt with in any great detail. Scene I is in "Robinson's House" on a stormy night. Arnold, in expectant mood, awaits Andre's coming and is not disappointed. Their conversation deals in prose with the objects of the British mission, not omitting the parting injunction of the commander to secure the person of General Washington. The scene closes with Andre's happy thought as to the concealment in his boot of the papers to be conveyed to Clinton. The second scene serves merely as a side-light on the conditions—the hopes and fears and rumors of subordinate officers who apparently have heard an echo or two of the contemplated treason and, in the endeavor to check the recently discovered intercourse between "the disaffected and the foe," are arming peasants for patrol purposes. Following, we see these peasants "in an outhouse" wondering whither their orders will send them and beguiling the time with song. The final scene, as Freneau left his drama, informs us of the rude awakening as to Arnold's scheming:

> This traitor Arnold, this vile, abandoned traitor,
> This monster of ingratitude unequalled,
> Has been conspiring with an English spy
> To render up the fort to General Clinton.

Freneau will not let the traitor remain in oblivion for, two years after the treason-episode, we read in a poem, "Arnold's Departure,"[1] seven stanzas in length:

With evil omens from the harbour sails
The ill-fated barque that worthless Arnold bears,—
God of the southern winds, call up the gales,
And whistle in rude fury round his ears!

With horrid waves insult his vessel's sides,
And may the east wind on a leeward shore
Her cables part while she in tumult rides,
And shatter into shivers every oar!

And let the north wind to her ruin haste,
With such a rage, as when from mountains high
He rends the tall oak with his weighty blast,
And ruin spreads where'er his forces fly!

The reference is to Arnold's sailing for England in December after the surrender of Cornwallis. The former American general found himself a social no less than a political exile abroad. His life following his crime was far, indeed, from happy in the deeper sense and the approach of death cast shadows before it, clouding the end in bitter memories.

During the long struggle of the colonies there was deeply impressed upon the imagination of the people the conduct of certain British prison-ships lying in and about the harbor waters of New York City. In his eventful life, Freneau experienced incarceration in one of these. While

1. "Poems:" II, 103.

on board ship bound south in the spring of 1780 he was captured with the crew and other passengers and returned to New York City to be confined in the "Scorpion", one of

> These Prison-Ships where pain and horror dwell,
> Where death in tenfold vengeance holds his reign,
> And injur'd ghosts, yet unaveng'd, complain.

Later, he was transferred to a hospital-ship where he languished for some time. Upon his release, Freneau wrote of his experiences, observations, and impressions in a very bitter yet brilliant and vivid poem[1] in three cantos of some four hundred couplets. There are touches, here and there, of word painting and imagery, and the poem is rich in choice satire and invective with the genuine Freneau point.

Canto I bears the title, "The Capture," and is prefaced by these four lines which serve fittingly to introduce the reader to the spirit of the whole work:

> Amid these ills no tyrant dared refuse
> My right to pen the dictates of the muse,
> To point the terrors of the infernal place,
> And fiends from Europe, insolent as base.

Speaking of the ship "Aurora" in which he had embarked "outward bound, to St. Eustatia's shore," Freneau records the workmanship that went to her making:

> From Philadelphia's crowded port she came;
> For there the builder plann'd her lofty frame,

1. "The British Prison-Ship. Written 1780;" "Poems," II, 18-39.

With wond'rous skill, and excellence of art
He form'd, dispos'd, and order'd every part,
With joy beheld the stately fabric rise
To a stout bulwark of stupendous size,
'Till launch'd at last, capacious of the freight,
He left her to the Pilots, and her fate.

Out of the Delaware to the open sea the ship "seaward spread her sails" and headed south, when,

Too soon the Seaman's glance, extending wide,
Far distant in the east a ship espy'd,
. . . . . .
From her top-gallant flow'd an English Jack;
With all her might she strove to gain our track,
Nor strove in vain—with pride and power elate,
Wing'd on by hell, she drove us to our fate;
No stop, no stay, her bloody crew intends,
(So flies a comet with his host of fiends)
Nor oaths, nor prayers, arrest her swift career,
Death in her front, and ruin in her rear.

The enemy proved to be the frigate "Iris," once the "Hancock,"[1] built on "New Albion's shore." Overhauled, the "Aurora" sought the shore but

In vain we sought to reach the joyless strand,
Fate stood between, and barr'd us from the land;
All dead becalm'd, and helpless as we lay,
The ebbing current forc'd us back, to sea,
While vengeful *Iris,* thirsting for our blood,
Flash'd her red lightnings o'er the trembling flood;
At every flash a storm of ruin came
'Till our shock'd vessel shook through all her frame—

1. See p. 147, above.

A gallant return fire, though all in vain, shot forth from the luckless "Aurora."

> But how unequal was this daring flight!
> Our stoutest guns threw but a six pound ball,
> Twelve pounders from the foe our sides did maul,
> . . . . . .
> The lofty topsails with their yards descend,
> And the proud foe, such leagues of ocean pass'd,
> His wish completed in our woe at last.
> Convey'd to York, we found, at length, too late,
> That Death was better than the prisoner's fate;
> There doom'd to famine, shackles and despair,
> Condemn'd to breathe a foul, infected air
> In sickly hulks, devoted while we lay,
> Successive funerals gloom'd each dismal day
> But what on captives British rage can do,
> Another Canto, friend, shall let you know.

The next hundred couplets essay the portrayal in high colors of the horrors of the poet's two months' confinement on board the "Scorpion." Freneau declares:

> Weak as I am, I'll try my strength today
> And my best arrows at these hell-hounds play,
> To future years one scene of death prolong,
> And hang them up to infamy, in song.

No mincing of words with Freneau,—he speaks as he feels constrained—the bitterest words seem hardly bitter enough for his purpose. The rotten hulk lay in the river, so old that

> Scarce on the waters she sustain'd her bones.

Burned by the scorching sun by day and stifled by the foul

air at night, three hundred wretched prisoners spent their time as best they might. The misery of the long hours after dark is particularly vivid:

When to the ocean dives the western sun,
And the scorch'd Tories fire their evening gun,
"Down, rebels, down!" the angry Scotchmen cry,
"Damn'd dogs, descend, or by our broad swords die!"
. . . . . .
Some for a bed their fetter'd vestments join,
And some on chests, and some on floors recline;
Shut from the blessings of the evening air,
Pensive we lay with mingled corpses there,
Meagre and wan, and scorch'd with heat below,
We loom'd like ghosts, ere death had made us so—
How could we else, where heat and hunger join'd
Thus to debase the body and the mind,
Where cruel thirst the parching throat invades,
Dries up the man, and fits him for the shades.

The following six lines sum up the long and weary weeks:

Hunger and thirst to work our woe combine,
And mouldy bread, and flesh of rotten swine,
The mangled carcase, and the batter'd brain,
The doctor's poison, and the captain's cane,
The soldier's musquet, and the steward's debt,
The evening shackle, and the noon-day threat.

Finally, the strain told heavily upon the prisoner and, as he tells us in the last lines of Canto II:

My name was enter'd on the sickman's list;
Twelve wretches more the same dark symptoms took,
And these were enter'd on the doctor's book;

The loathsome *Hunter* was our destin'd place,
The *Hunter,* to all hospitals disgrace;
With soldiers sent to guard us on our road,
Joyful we left the *Scorpion's* dire abode:
Some tears we shed for the remaining crew,
Then curs'd the hulk, and from her sides withdrew.

And now, the closing canto, wherein existence, hardly life, is depicted aboard this "slaughter-house, yet hospital in name." If Freneau is bitter in his description of his days in the "Scorpion," his words on men, things and conditions aboard the "Hunter" are acid itself. Significant of the future was his welcome by the ship's mate,

That wretch who, banish'd from the navy crew,
Grown old in blood, did here his trade renew;
His serpent's tongue, when on his charge let loose,
Utter'd reproaches, scandal, and abuse,
Gave all to hell who, dar'd his king disown,
And swore mankind were made for George alone.
Ten thousand times, to irritate our woe,
He wish'd us founder'd in the gulph below;
Ten thousand times he brandish'd high his stick,
And swore as often that we were not sick—
. . . . . .

He pointed to the stairs that led below
To damps, disease, and varied shapes of woe—
Down to the gloom I took my pensive way,
Along the decks the dying captives lay;
Some struck with madness, some with scurvy pain'd,
But still of putrid fevers most complain'd!

Of satire and invective, a better passage—which we shall quote at length—may hardly be found than this referring to the ship's doctors:

From Brookland groves a Hessian doctor came,
Not great his skill, nor greater much his fame;
Fair science never call'd the wretch her son,
And art disdain'd the stupid man to own;—
Can you admire that Science was so coy,
Or Art refus'd his genius to employ?—
Do men with brutes an equal dullness share,
Or cuts yon grovelling mole the midway air?
In polar worlds can Eden's blossoms blow?
Do trees of God in barren deserts grow?
Are loaded vines to Etna's summit known,
Or revells the peach beneath the torrid zone
Yet still he doom'd his genius to the rack,
And, as you may suppose, was own'd a quack.
He on his charge the healing work begun
With antimonial mixtures, by the tun,
Ten minutes was the time he deign'd to stay,
The time of grace allotted once a day—
He drencht us well with bitter draughts 'tis true,
Nostrums from hell, and cortex from Peru—
Some with his pills he sent to Pluto's reign,
And some he blister'd with his flies of Spain.
His cream of Tartar walk'd its deadly round,
Till the lean patient at the potion frown'd,
And swore that hemlock, death or what you will,
Were nonsense to the drugs that stuff'd his bill.
On those refusing he bestow'd a kick,
Or menac'd vengeance with his walking stick;
Here uncontroul'd he exercis'd his trade,
And grew experienced by the deaths he made;
By frequent blows we from his cane endur'd
He kill'd at least as many as he cur'd;
On our lost comrades built his future fame,
And scatter'd fate, where'er his footsteps came.
Some did not seem obedient to his will,
And swore he mingled poison with his pill;
But I acquit him by a fair confession,

He was no Englishman—he was a Hessian.
Although a dunce, he had some sense of sin,
Or else the Lord knows where we now had been;
Perhaps in that far country sent to range
Where never prisoner meets with an exchange—
Then had we all been banish'd out of time
Nor I return'd to plague the world with rhyme.
Fool though he was yet candour must confess
Not chief Physician was this dog of Hesse—
One master o'er the murdering tribe was plac'd
By him the rest were honour'd or disgrac'd;—
Once, and but once, by some strange fortune led
He came to see the dying and the dead—
He came—but anger so deform'd his eye,
And such a faulchion glitter'd on his thigh,
And such a gloom his visage darken'd o'er,
And two such pistols in his hands he bore!
That, by the gods!—with such a load of steel
He came, we thought to murder, not to heal—
Hell in his heart, and mischief in his head,
He gloom'd destruction, and had smote us dead,
Had he so dar'd—but fate with-held his hand—
He came—blasphem'd—and turn'd again to land.

After hardly less venomous epithets hurled at the captain who "swore, till every prisoner stood aghast," and no measured terms in noting the horrors of the daily fare "so black, corrupted, mortified and lean," Freneau moves on to the care of the prison dead:

Each day, at least three carcases we bore,
And scratch'd them graves along the sandy shore;
By feeble hands the shallow graves were made,
No stone memorial o'er the corpses laid;
In barren sands, and far from home, they lie,
No friend to shed a tear, when passing by;

O'er the mean tombs insulting Britons tread,
Spurn at the sand, and curse the rebel dead.

"The British Prison-Ship" closes here the actual description of the long incarceration, though twenty-five couplets are added supplicating Americans decently to entomb the bones of their patriots who have gone before and never to forget the days of suffering, agony and death.

Freneau had met prison-ship conditions at first hand and expressed himself with the vividness that comes of personal contact. But he was not alone among the bards. For one, Col. David Humphreys, aide-de-camp to Washington, had something to say upon the subject in a poem previously noted,[1] comprising twenty-three pages of couplets and entitled, "Address to the Armies of the United States of America, written during the American Revolutionary War." We read of British prison-life in general:

"Why, Britain! rag'd thine insolence and scorn?
Why burst thy vengeance on the wretch forlorn?
The cheerless captive, to slow death consign'd,
Chill'd with keen frost, in prison glooms confin'd,
Oh, hope bereft, by thy vile minions curst,
With hunger famish'd, and consum'd with thirst,
Without one friend—when death's last horror stung,
Roll'd the wild eye, and gnaw'd the anguish'd tongue.[2]

To base a judgment entirely upon these poems and others of their kind, would, however, possibly be unjust to the true state of affairs experienced, but after allow-

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1. See p. 104.
2. In volume entitled, "Life of the Honorable Major-General Isaac Putnam; . . . " By Anna Seward; p. 204.

ance has been made for the temperament of Freneau and his fellow-bards who seemed to revel in extravagant statement and appeal, there still remains the unpleasant consciousness that conditions wretched and disgraceful must have obtained on board the prison and hospital-ships during the Revolution. Mr. Roosevelt writes of the wretched burying of the dead:[1] "They were evil, pestilent hulks of merchantmen or men-of-war, moored mostly in Wallabout Bay; and in their noisome rotten holds men died by hundreds, and were buried in shallow pits at the water's edge, the graves being soon uncovered by the tide. In after years many hogsheads of human bones were taken from the foul ooze to receive christian burial."[2] It is only fair to quote the same author once more for he remarks later on: "The king's officers as a whole doubtless meant to behave humanely, but the provost-marshal of New York was a very brutal man, and the cheating commissaries who undertook to feed the prisoners made large fortunes by furnishing them with spoiled provisions, curtailing their rations, and the like."[3]

The fall of 1780 seemed to show unmistakable signs that the end of the conflict was not far distant though the patriot forces found it very far from easy to run the race set before them. Cornwallis had begun his preparations for what proved to be the last scene and had planned to march northward in one splendid, desperate

1. Roosevelt: "New York," pp. 140-1.
2. Fort Green Park Monument, Brooklyn, New York City, commemorates these days.
3. P. 140. See also contemporary account of Thomas Andros, 1781, cited in Tyler: "Literary History of the American Revolution," II, 238, ff.

dash to put an end to further resistance. His path was by all odds a difficult one. At King's Mountain, near the northern border of South Carolina, was fought a brilliant battle on October 7, 1780, one which called forth numerous songs expressive of joy and thanksgiving. And, well it might, for over one-fourth of Cornwallis's forces were captured. What with the uncertainty of adequate reinforcements from abroad, the doubtful character and strength of the French assistance, the daring of Marion, Sumter and Pickens, the distressing tactics and brilliant campaigning of Greene, the English commander, like his predecessors, found his plans of conquest and subjugation entirely unlikely of complete realization. The year of Yorktown was at hand.

CHAPTER XI

YORKTOWN AND AFTER

Supreme interest in the outcome of Cornwallis's campaign in the South—Freneau's new "Freeman's Journal"—Eutaw Springs—"To the Memory of the Brave Americans under General Greene, in South Carolina, Who fell in the action of September 8, 1781"—General Greene—the campaign before Yorktown—Joel Barlow's tribute to Greene—Freneau's estimate of Cornwallis—The surrender—Personal element in poetry of the time—"The Prospect of America" by Ladd—Thanksgiving over the peace—"Peace," by Low—"A Thanksgiving Hymn"—Delay in making definitive treaty—Loyalists and their views—Joseph Stansbury—"The United States"—"Let us be Happy as Long as we Can"—Freneau toward the Tories—"Truth Anticipated"—toward King George—three poems—toward patriot leaders—Col. David Humphreys on Washington—Freneau's "Verses Occasioned by General Washington's arrival in Philadelphia on his way to his seat in Virginia, December, 1783."

THE year of Yorktown—1781—is naturally one of supreme interest and moment. Cornwallis and his fortunes are the dominant theme for upon the success or failure of the British southern campaign was felt to rest the final outcome of the conflict. As we have noted in the preceding chapter weariness over the prolonged struggle had been manifest for some time and many hearts were yearning for peace. The bards continued ac-

tive, celebrating as in the earlier years the several aspects of the changing situation. Contribution after contribution appeared in Freneau's newly established paper, "Freeman's Journal or North American Intelligencer," published at Philadelphia in the spring of the new year. In one notable poem Freneau affords us a few stanzas which have been rated with entire justice very high. The poem, "To the Memory of the Brave Americans Under General Greene, in South Carolina, Who fell in the action of September 8, 1781,"[1] is, it would seem, his best contribution to patriotic verse from a purely literary standpoint. It is unusual in that boastfulness and intemperance of expression are wanting and that its metre and form are in keeping with its spirit and tone. The action Freneau writes of took place at Eutaw Springs located about fifty miles from Charleston. Speaking of this skirmish with the British, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge says: "Coming down from the Santee, Greene gave their united forces battle at Eutaw Springs, where at first he carried all before him; but his advance was checked by a party who threw themselves into a brick house, and he was in a second attack defeated. The total loss to the Americans was over five hundred; to the British over fifteen hundred men."[2] Here is the poem on this event:

At Eutaw Springs the valiant died;
  Their limbs with dust are covered o'er—
Weep on, ye springs, your tearful tide;
  How many heroes are no more!

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1. "Poems:" II, 101-102. "First published in the Freeman's Journal, November 21, 1781." (Pattee).
2. Lodge: "A Short History of the English Colonies in America," p. 514.

If in this wreck of ruin, they
  Can yet be thought to claim a tear,
O smite your gentle breast and say
  The friends of freedom slumber here!

Thou, who shalt trace this bloody plain,
  If goodness rules thy generous breast,
Sigh for the wasted rural reign;
  Sigh for the shepherds, sunk to rest!

Stranger, their humble graves adorn;
  You too may fall, and ask a tear;
'Tis not the beauty of the morn
  That proves the evening shall be clear.

They saw their injured country's woe:
  The flaming town, the wasted field;
Then rushed to meet the insulting foe;
  They took the spear—but left the shield.

Led by thy conquering genius, Greene,
  The Britons they compelled to fly;
None distant viewed the fatal plain,
  None grieved, in such a cause to die—

But like the Parthians, famed of old,
  Who, flying, still their arrows threw,
These routed Britons, full as bold,
  Retreated, and retreating slew.

Now rest in peace, our patriot band;
  Though far from nature's limits thrown,
We trust they find a happier land,
  A brighter sunshine of their own.[1]

There is in "Eutaw Springs" a touch of finer sentiment—more restrained, more temperate, and broader in

1. See introduction, above, p. 19.

scope—than in much, if not most, that Freneau wrote. It is worth dwelling upon at length for with a change in wording, here and there, it might fittingly serve as a memorial to all who gave their life-blood in the cause they deemed just.

The war in the South having proved so unsuccessful, it needed no prophet to foretell what the outcome must be. The allied French and Americans under Greene, Lafayette and Rochambeau with the British earl's own ill fortune and disappointed hopes compelled his withdrawal to Yorktown, Virginia, in early August. Here was Washington's opportunity which he had the sagacity to seize and push to its utmost in his superb march from the Hudson to the James. Washington and Greene as generals never shone forth more brilliantly than in these final campaigns before Yorktown and their efforts and genius were rewarded on the nineteenth of October when Lord Cornwallis capitulated, leaving little to be done between the mother-country and her once loyal colonies but the arrangement of the terms of peace and the signing of the treaty two years later.

Of the American commanders in active service during the closing years General Nathaniel Greene was very clearly believed to be Washington's most able aid. We have ample evidence in the verse of the day as to the high esteem in which the makers thereof held the skilful tactician and it is due his memory to note certain of the lines indited to his fame. Joel Barlow in "The Vision of Columbus," above cited,[1] celebrated in his usual heightened style the second great retreat of the Revolution—Greene's

1. See p. 66.

running triumph through the southland, wasting the energies of the British forces and virtually compelling their retirement finally to their last stand. Of the American, the poet writes:

When Greene, in lonely greatness, rose to view,
A few firm patriots to his standard drew,
And, moving stately to a rising ground,
Bade the loud trump to speedy vengeance sound;
Fired by the voice, new squadrons, from afar,
Crowd to the hero and demand the war.
Round all the shores and plains he turn'd his eye,
Saw forts arise and conquering banners fly:
The saddening scene suspends his rising soul,
And fates of empires in his bosom roll.
With scanty force where should be lift the steel,
While hosting foes immeasurably wheel?
Or how behold the boundless slaughter spread,
Himself stand idle and his country bleed?
A silent moment thus the hero stood,
And held his warriors from the field of blood;
Then points the British legions where to roll,
Marks out their progress and designs the whole.
He lures their chief, o'er yielding realms to roam,
To build his greatness and to find his doom;
With gain and grandeur feeds his fateless flame,
And leaves the victory to a nobler name;
Gives to great Washington, to meet his way
Nor claims the glories of so bright a day.
Now to the conquer'd south with gathering force,
O'er sanguine plains he shapes his rapid course;
Forts fall around him, hosts before him fly,
And captive bands his growing train supply.
At length, far spreading thro' a fatal field,
Collecting chiefs their circling armies wheel'd;
New Eutaw's fount, where, long renown'd for blood,
Pillars of ancient fame in triumph stood,

Britannia's squadrons, ranged in order bright,
Stand, like a fiery wall, and wait the shock of fight.

. . . . . .

O'er all the great Observer fix'd his eye,
Mark'd the whole strife, beheld them fall and fly;
He saw where Greene thro' all the combat drove,
And death and victory with his presence move;
Beneath his arm saw Marion pour the strife,
Pickens and Sumner, prodigal of life;
He saw young Washington the child of fame,
Preserve in fight the honours of his name;
Brave Lee, in pride of youth and veteran might,
Swept the dread field, and put whole troops to flight;
While numerous chiefs, that equal trophies raise,
Wrought not unseen the deeds of deathless praise.

Toward the British general-in-chief Freneau's feelings were expressed in no complimentary terms and on his overthrow, the poet's verse was exultant to the last degree. Tories, too, he continued bitterly to assail and only in Washington and his men could he discover anything to glorify.

In one piece[1] of verse referring to Cornwallis, Freneau writes: "Hail, great destroyer (equalled yet by none)"—"Burgoyne himself was but a type of thee":—"Satan's best substitute," and "The plundering servant of a bankrupt king." In another[2] we behold the earl thus apostrophized:

Cornwallis! thou art rank'd among the great;
Such was the will of all-controuling fate.
As mighty men, who liv'd in days of yore,

1. "To Lord Cornwallis at York, Virginia." "Poems": II, 80-7.
2. "On the Fall of General Earl Cornwallis;" (a poem of over fifty heroic couplets) "Poems:" II, 92-100.

Were figur'd out some centuries before;
So you with them in equal honour join,
Your great precursor's name was Jack Burgoyne!
Like you was he, a man in arms renown'd,
Who, hot for conquest, sail'd the ocean round;
This, this was he, who scour'd the woods for praise,
And burnt down cities to describe the blaze!

And later in the same piece:

Now curs'd with life, a foe to man and God,
Like Cain, I drive you to the land of Nod.
He with a brother's blood his hands did stain,
One brother he, you have a thousand slain.

The final siege by the combined French and American forces, the lingering hope and, later, the utter extremity of the British, and the virtual culmination of hostilities in the surrender of the king's army in October—all received proper recognition in the verse of the day. The personal element enters in large measure as in the earlier verse and it would be difficult to discover the omission of the names of any who had served the cause of independence. Washington, particularly, seemed in the public mind the representation of the whole struggle, if we may be guided by the output in rhyme and metre. He is spoken of by turns as the "glorious son, of British hosts the terror," and the name "to latest times respected."

From among the numerous works published at the close of the war let us cite the following,[1] entitled, "The Pros-

1. "Literary Remains of Joseph B. Ladd, M. D.," N. Y., 1832. Ladd (1764-1786) was one of many who passed their leisure moments in verse-making, frequently with no thought that their work would ultimately appear in print.

pect of America," and "inscribed to his excellency General Washington." Hancock, Montgomery, Adams, Paine, Franklin, Greene, Wayne and others, all are duly praised but of the foremost we read:

Great Washington! Illustrious Chief,
Illustrious Chief! amidst thy sweet retreat,
Mayst thou live happy, as thou'rt good and great.
. . . . . .
In ev'ry heart thy monument be known,
With this inscription: "Here is Washington."

From another poet[1] may be noted the poem, "Peace," which, as it is stated in volume one of his works, was "published shortly after the ratification of peace between America and Great Britain." Montgomery, Sullivan, Gates, Greene, with others, are all mentioned. Of the American envoy at Paris, we read:

In thee, the Muse, oh, Franklin! fain would tell
What useful lore and sage experience dwell;
In thy philosophy such lights appear,
As make a wond'ring world thy name revere;
Thy genius hath repell'd the lightning's force,
And turn'd its vengeful blaze a safer course;
Nor thee alone hath Science taught to find,
Whate'er enlightens and expands the mind.
It gives the self-taught Rittenhouse renown,
And joys our learned Jefferson to crown.

And of one other:

The foremost hero on the lists of Fame,
Is Washington, a memorable name:

1. Low, Samuel: "Poems," 2 vols., N. Y., 1800: "To his own amusement and improvement he has written; at the request of his friends he publishes." See preface, volume I.

Oh, truly great and good! oh, truly brave!
Who didst thy country from oppression save.
Illustrious chief! that country's joy and pride,
The admiration of the world beside;
May many years be still upon thee shed,
And Time roll prosp'rous o'er thy honor'd head:
And, now the work of devastation's done,
Now, by thy arm, at length, the battle's won,
To tranquil, rural scenes again retir'd,
Mayst thou enjoy the bliss so long desir'd;
There calmly may thy minutes glide, nor cease
Till Heav'n shall call thee to eternal peace.

And the poet closes with a couplet fervent enough:

Oh! long preserve, kind Heav'n, our prosp'rous state,
And make us *good*, as well as wise and great!

The poet offers his sentiment on the consummation so devoutly wished—peace after strife:

Deep in a grove, that mock'd the northern blast,
And o'er the scene a solemn embrage cast,
The guardian Genius of Columbia stood;
Serene she smil'd upon her native wood,
And tun'd to harmony her grateful lay;
The conscious forest own'd her cheering ray;
She told how Peace her olive-branch display'd,
And thus, melodious, sung the raptur'd maid:
"Hail, favour'd land! where genial Peace now deigns
To shed her joys o'er groves, and hills, and plains,
Delightful scenes, by smiling Plenty grac'd,
A paradise emerging from a waste!
What floods of transport, what delight intense,
That now Columbia's free, pervade each sense!
Long have her sons the contest well maintain'd
For native Freedom: lo! the prize is gain'd:

The painful conflict o'er, they reap, at last,
The sweet reward of all their labours past.

Sing, tuneful tenants of the woodland shade,
For lo! the peaceful standard is display'd;
Ye lowing herds exalt your praises high,
And let your hoarse thanksgivings reach the sky;
Ye sportive flocks bleat loud, and let the sound
Thro' hills and vales reverberate around;
Let hills and vales, inanimate, rejoice,
All nature raise a gratulating voice!
Wave high your heads ye trees, your joy attest;
And bloom ye flow'rs, in various colours drest,
Expand your beauties to th' admiring eye,
A lovely scene!—ye who in waters lie,
And gambol glad beneath the noontide ray,
In silent joy to Peace your homage pay;
Let Ocean's waves exult; and ev'ry spring
Murmur soft praises to Creation's King;
To Heaven's King let man now raise his voice,
Let him, in grateful strains supreme, rejoice;
Thou zephyrus, on willing wings, diffuse
Throughout the world the heart-reviving news,
That war, and rapine, and oppression cease,
That now our lot is Liberty and Peace!"

Another poem of the day exultant over the same glorious event, "A Thanksgiving Hymn," is worthy of full quotation:

The Lord above, in tender love,
  Hath sav'd us from our foes;
Through Washington the thing is done,
  The war is at a close.

America has won the day,
  Through Washington, our chief;

Come let's rejoice with heart and voice,
And bid adieu to grief.

Now we have peace, and may increase
In number, wealth, and arts;
If every one, like Washington,
Will strive to do their parts.

Then let's agree, since we are free,
All needless things to shun;
And lay aside all pomp and pride,
Like our great Washington.

Use industry and frugal be,
Like Washington the brave;
So shall we see, 'twill easy be,
Our country for to save.

From present wars and future foes,
And all that we may fear;
While Washington, the great brave one,
Shall as our chief appear.

Industry and frugality,
Will all our taxes pay;
In virtuous ways, we'll spend our days,
And for our rulers pray.

The Thirteen States, united sets,
In Congress simply grand;
The Lord himself preserve their health,
That they may rule this land,

Whilst every State, without its mate,
Doth rule itself by laws,
Will sovereign be, and always free;
To grieve there is no cause.

But all should try, both low and high,
Our freedom to maintain;
Pray God to bless our grand Congress,
And cease from every sin.

Then sure am I, true liberty,
Of every sort will thrive;
With one accord we'll praise the Lord
All glory to Him give.

To whom all praise is due always,
For he is all in all;
George Washington, that noble one,
On his great name doth call.

Our Congress too, before they do,
Acknowledge Him supreme;
Come let us all before Him fall,
And glorify His name.[1]

It will be of interest to note the thought of the writer of the above hymn with regard to the equality and freedom of the states making up the Union. In the eighth and ninth stanzas we have, it would seem, a very early expression on the relations of the states to one another and to the Union or rather confederation as it then was, into which they had formed themselves.

The close of active field hostilities did not immediately lead to the final termination of the conflict of opinion and desire. Yorktown was two years old in story when the last British soldier bade farewell to New York.[2] Still all could see quite clearly that

1. See Moore: "Songs and Ballads," 376-379.
2. The Treaty had been signed in September, 1782, though not accepted by America till the following January. The British evacuated New York, November 25, 1783.

the inevitable was merely a matter patiently to be looked forward to. General satisfaction prevailed,—profound and gratifying to the continental forces, mingled bitter and sweet to the loyalists. One[1] of these latter, whose work has been especially preserved, manifests the peculiar interplay of emotions that bodied themselves forth in verse. The first which we shall quote is entitled, "The United States," and is in full as follows:

Now this War at length is o'er,
Let us think of it no more.
Every Party Lie or Name,
Cancel as our mutual Shame.
Bid each wound of Faction close,
Blushing we were ever Foes.

Now restor'd to Peace again,
Active Commerce ploughs the Main;
All the arts of Civil Life,
Swift succeed to Martial Strife;
Britain now allows their claim,
Rising Empire, Wealth, and Fame.[2]

The second piece by the same author, Stansbury, evidences the philosophic temper that the approaching distress which loyalists felt they would soon suffer tended to develop within them. It is entitled, rather appropriately, "Let us be Happy as Long as We Can."

I've heard in old times that a Sage us'd to say
The Seasons were nothing—December or May—

1. Joseph Stansbury. See "Loyal Verses," ed. by W. Sargent.
2. Ibid., p. 89; from manuscript of Joseph Stansbury (Sargent).

The Heat or the Cold never enter'd his Plan;
That all should be happy whenever they can.

No matter what Power directed the State,
He look'd upon such things as order'd by Fate.
Whether govern'd by many, or rul'd by one Man,
His rule was—be happy whenever you can.

. . . . . .

Time-serving I hate, yet I see no good reason
A leaf from their book should be thought out of season.
When kick'd like a foot-ball from Sheba to Dan,
Egad, let's be happy as long as we can.

Since no one can tell what to-morrow may bring,
Or which side shall triumph, the Congress or King;
Since Fate must o'errule us and carry her plan,
Why, let us be happy as long as we can.

To-night let's enjoy this good Wine and a Song,
And relish the hour which we cannot prolong
If Evil will come, we'll adhere to our Plan
And baffle Misfortune as long as we can.[1]

Toward Tories and toryism Freneau in particular was very severe and affords ample testimony in verse as to the hard trial to which loyalty was put even after hostilities had ceased. The publisher of a patriotic organ himself, he took peculiar delight in his keenly satirical verse to hold these objects of his scorn up to ridicule and abuse. The two royalist printers, James Rivington, editor of

1. "Printed from the Original Manuscript of Joseph Stansbury, and evidently adapted to the situation of the Tory refugees at New York, during the latter part of 1782 and the commencement of 1783, when the prospect was daily growing stronger of Great Britain relinquishing the war." Sargent, "Loyal Verses," pp. 86-87.

"The New York Royal Gazette," afterwards "The Royal Gazette," and Hugh Gaine, publisher of "The New York Mercury," afterwards "The New York Mercury and Weekly Gazette," were, in especial, objects of attack. In "Truth Anticipated,"[1] we read these lines on Rivington:

Now let us give credit to Jemmy, forsooth,
Since once in a way he has hit on the truth;
If again he returns to his practice of lies,
He hardly reflects where he'll go when he dies.

But still, when he dies, let it never be said
That he rests in his grave with no verse at his head;
But furnish, ye poets, some short epitaph,
And something like this, that readers may laugh:
Here *lies* a King's Printer, we needn't say who:
There is reason to think that he tells what is true:

But if he *lies* here, 'tis not over-strange,
His present position is but a small change,
So, reader pass on—'tis a folly to sigh,
For all his life long he did little but *lie*.

But it was for King George[2] himself that Freneau reserved his very choice epithets, and they would seem the last words in the language of abuse and bitterness. There is no need here to call from oblivion many of these but it may be well to cite a few selected from several poems. In "A Picture of the Times with Occasional Reflections," published in July, 1782,[3] and consisting of over thirty-five

1. "Poems": II, 143-146.
2. The historian Green says that "the shame of the darkest hour of English history lies wholly at his door"; p. 777, "A Short History of the English People." (Quoted by permission of American Book Company, Publishers).
3. "Poems"; II, 165-7.

heroic couplets, we read:

Touched from the life, I trace no ages fled,
I draw no curtain that conceals the dead;
To distant Britain let thy view be cast,
And say the present far exceeds the past;
Of all the plagues that e'er the world have curs'd,
Name George the tyrant, and you name the worst.

And in "The Political Balance, or, The Fates of Britain and America Compared," a work of fifty-nine quatrains, issued a few months before, we learn

Of a king with a mighty soft place in his head,
Who should join in his temper the ass and the mule,
The third of his name, and by far the worse fool.[1]

Particularly bitter is the poem, "On the British King's Speech Recommending Peace with the American States,"[2] which appeared in "Freeman's Journal," in March, 1783. Two of the King's ministers are called "twin sons of hell," and the sovereign himself is named a "monster":

Let jarring powers make war or peace,
Monster!—no peace can greet your breast:
Our murdered friends can never cease
To hover round and break your rest!

---

1. "George III summed up in his person the pertinacity characteristic of the Guelps and the Stuarts. The gift of firmness, the blending of which with foresight and intelligence produces the greatest of characters, was united in George III with narrowness of vision, absorption in the claims of self, and a pedantic clinging to the old and traditional;" p. 97, "William Pitt and National Revival," by J. Holland Rose, Litt. D., London; G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1911.

2. "Poems": II, 217-9.

Though, of course, such terrible effusions are excessive in the extreme, they at any rate serve to indicate the feeling towards the king personally of at least one patriot and he of commanding importance and influence in his chosen field.

Let us revert to the pleasanter side and cite a poet's estimate of the men who led the forces of liberty and a poet's expression of gratitude to all who helped them in their common cause:

Accept, great men, that share of honest praise
A grateful nation to your merit pays:
Verse is too mean your merit to display,
And words too weak our praises to convey.
When first proud Britain raised her hostile hand
With claims unjust to bind our native land,
Transported armies, and her millions spent
To enforce the mandate that a tyrant sent:
"Resist! resist!" was heard through every state.
You heard the call, and feared your country's fate;
Then rising fierce in arms, for war arrayed,
You taught to vanquish those who dared invade.
O! may you live to hail that glorious day[1]
When Britain homeward shall pursue her way—
That race subdued, who filled the world with slain
And rode tyrannic o'er the subject main.
What few presumed, you boldly have achieved,
A tyrant humbled, and a world relieved.

. . . . . .

O Washington, who leadst this glorious train,
Still may the fates thy valued life maintain.

. . . . . .

Throughout the world your growing fame has spread,

1. Realized fully on November 25, 1783, "Evacuation Day," when the British army at New York embarked for home.

In every country are your virtues read;
Remotest India hears your deeds of fame,
The hardy Scythian stammers at your name;
The haughty Turk, now longing to be free,
Neglects his Sultan to enquire of thee;
The barbarous Briton hails you to his shores,
And calls him Rebel, whom his heart adores.[1]

Other poets, too, paid tribute to the great Virginian. In a poem, quoted above,[2] Col. David Humphreys wrote these lines:

Now darkness gathered round,
The thunder rumbled, and the tempest frown'd;
When lo! to guide us thro' the storm of war,
Beam'd the bright splendor of Virginia's star.
O first of heroes, fav'rite of the skies,
To what dread toils thy country bade thee rise!
. . . . . .
'Twas thine to change the sweetest scenes of life
For public cares—to guide the embattled strife—
Unnumber'd ills of every kind to dare,
The winter's blast, the summer's sultry air,
The lurking dagger, and the turbid storms
Of wasting war, with death in all its forms
Nor aught could daunt. Unspeakably serene,
Thy conscious soul smil'd o'er the dreadful scene.
. . . . . .
His martial skill our rising armies form'd;
His patriot zeal their gen'rous bosoms warm'd;
His voice inspir'd, his godlike presence led.[3]

We shall close our chapter with a few of the seventeen

1. "An address to the Commander-in-chief, Officers, and Soldiers of the American Army," "Freeman's Journal," September, 1781; "Poems": II, 81-3.
2. P. 189.
3. "Address to the Armies of the United States of America," in volume by Seward, pp. 198-9.

stanzas of a poem written on Washington's return to his home at Mt. Vernon in December, 1783. We hear his praises sung by him who has been truly called "the poet of the revolution":[1]

The great, unequal conflict past,
  The Briton banish'd from our shore,
Peace, Heaven-descended, comes at last,
  And hostile nations rage no more;
    From fields of death the weary swain
    Returning, seeks his native plain.

In every vale she smiles serene,
  Freedom's bright stars more radiant rise,
New charms she adds to every scene,
  Her brighter sun illumes our skies;
    Remotest realms admiring stand,
    And hail the Hero of our land.

He comes!—the Genius of these lands—
  Fame's thousand tongues his worth confess,
Who conquer'd with his suffering bands,
  And grew immortal by distress:
    Thus calms succeed the stormy blast,
    And valour is repaid at last.

O Washington!—thrice glorious name,
  What due rewards can man decree—
Empires are far below thy aim,
  And sceptres have no charms for thee;
    Virtue alone has thy regard,
    And she must be thy great reward.

For ravag'd realms and conquer'd seas
  Rome gave the great imperial prize,
And, swell'd with pride, for feats like these,

1. "Verses Occasioned by General Washington's arrival in Philadelphia on his way to his seat in Virginia, December, 1783," in "Freeman's Journal," December, 1783, "Poems": II, 225-29.

Transferr'd her heroes to the skies:—
A brighter scene your deeds display,
You gain those heights a different way.

. . . . . .

Throughout the east you gain applause,
And soon the Old World, taught by you,
Shall blush to own her barbarous laws,
Shall learn instruction from the New:
Monarchs shall hear the humble plea,
Nor urge too far the proud decree.

. . . . . .

Your fame, thus spread to distant lands,
May envy's fiercest blasts endure,
Like Egypt's pyramids it stands,
Built on a basis more secure;
Time's latest age shall own in you
The patriot and the statesman too.

. . . . . .

Nor less in wisdom than in war
Freedom shall still employ your mind,
Slavery shall vanish, wide and far,
'Till not a trace is left behind;
Your counsels not bestow'd in vain
Shall still protect this infant reign.

. . . . . .

O say, thou great, exalted name!
What Muse can boast of equal lays,
Thy world disdains all vulgar fame,
Transcends the noblest poet's praise,
Art soars, unequal to the flight,
And genius sickens at the height.

For states redeem'd—our western reign
Restor'd by thee to milder sway,
Thy conscious glory shall remain
When this great globe is swept away,
And all is lost that pride admires,
And all the pageant scene expires.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Retrospect, Criticism, and Opinion

A nation's poetry—its value—The spirit of the American Revolution—its complex nature—Trevelyan on British public opinion—Professor Tyler on the Loyalists' literary remains—Colonists' knowledge of affairs and men—The bards and Washington—Hopkinson's early estimate—Philip Freneau, "the poet of the Revolution"—Criticism—Tyler, Wendell, Pattee—An opinion—A verse-galaxy.

IN his essay entitled, "Mere Literature," Woodrow Wilson has said: "There is more of a nation's politics to be got out of its poetry than out of all its systematic writers upon public affairs and constitutions."[1] To put it differently: a nation's songs and ballads bear a closer kinship to the nation's heart-throbs than do the statutes and decisions made and written by her citizens. We feel the pulse of life in its living before that life has crystallized into formula and the articles of political belief; we have a realization of the process rather than of the product of the workings whereby things have come to be as they are.

The present essay has been to little purpose if it has not served to reveal the spirit of the time of which it

1. Wilson: "Mere Literature," N. Y. 1896, p. 10.

treats as indicative of a people's thought that was far from simple; rather, indeed, a great complex varying from period to period and from place to place. Our study, it would seem, has given evidence first of the fact that throughout the earlier years of the struggle for American independence and long before the skirmish on Lexington green there was, among certain classes or at least in the minds of some individuals, a realization that the colonies' ultimate destiny was political autonomy, separate from the British empire it might be or as still a part thereof. And secondly, it must have appeared that through all the years of conflict there persisted a strong feeling of loyalty to the crown, a conviction on the part of no inconsiderable number of people that the cause of contention and disunion was wholly inadequate to justify the taking up of arms or a belief and a hope on the part of others that finally the dispute would in some way be settled and reconciliation be effected. Furthermore, it is manifest that the sympathies of Englishmen at home were not wholly on the king's side but were seriously divided and as the years passed lessened not so much perhaps as increased in favor of the rebels across the seas.

Trevelyan remarks: "British public opinion was never unanimous at any stage of the American war; but in what proportion that opinion was divided it is impossible to determine at the distance of a hundred and thirty years. . . . Anything may be proved on either side by a judicious selection of individual utterances that were made in all good faith, but too frequently from very imperfect knowledge."[1] And the same writer adds, later on: "The

1. "The American Revolution," III, 163-4.

surest criterion of the popularity attaching to a warlike policy is afforded by the prevailing tone and tendency of the public journals."[1] As far as the latter were concerned in the struggle, both loyalists and patriots as we have seen[2] were not without support. In New York—always doubtful in its feelings and convictions—the loyalist printers, Rivington and Gaine, published their broadsides in defense of the king, while in Philadelphia, the rebel capital, Freneau issued his journal in favor of everything American. And these are only typical for there were many in the same and other cities.

It is matter of note, also, how intimate was the knowledge of events, how clear the appreciation of the questions at issue, their meaning and significance, and with what discrimination at times the actors in the conflict—ministerial, congressional and military,—were considered. We seem to feel that toward king, parliament and ministry the Rebel far outdid the Tory in his bitterness toward congress and patriot leader. But we must bear in mind, as a corrective to judgment, that much of the loyalist's endeavor was suppressed, has been permitted to lie neglected through the years and that on the other hand the expression of the patriot feelings in song and ballad would naturally, in such a period of storm and stress, tend to be extreme and extravagant.

Professor Tyler[3] sums up the matter admirably: "That the writings of the Loyalists, from 1776 to 1783, were in number inferior to those of the opposite party, can now

1. "The American Revolution," III, p. 165.
2. See p. 37.
3. "Literary History of the American Revolution," II, 51.

surprise no one who considers the circumstances of that time, when all active Loyalists had been ruthlessly harried out of the country or harried into enemy's lines, and when in all the length and breadth of the land, from New Hampshire to Georgia, not a newspaper, not a printing press, was left at their service, excepting, of course, in the city of New York and in such other large towns as might chance to be for any part of the time under British occupation. Moreover, it will not be forgotten that such execrable things as Tory writings, even if they got into print, could hardly get into circulation; they could come in only as they were smuggled in, and they could pass from hand to hand only by that sort of stealth which is itself a confession of crime."

We may frequently gain a nearer view of the truth of each side to the controversy by reading the writings of the other, as notably in the case of the impotent Congress at Philadelphia and again in that of the French Alliance. Nowhere, perhaps, can we see these as they were more clearly than in such a poem as that of the Reverend Jonathan Odell, quoted above,[1] and in Tory expressions of doubt as to the real benefit that in the end would accrue from the treaty of 1778.

Notable, too, is the deep and widespread respect, even among certain of his foes, in which Washington was frequently held by so many of the bards. When other leaders are praised he is extolled, when disaster comes and ruin is imminent the calm, dignified figure of the commander-in-chief seems at least to certain of these poets, and those of influence withal, to stand out impressively

1. P. 166.

reassuring. Not that we should infer that bitter jealousies did not exist for they did, mean and sordid spirits there were, nor that envious striving for place and power failed to make itself known, for it did, ambitious self-seeking and misjudging criticism there were; but rather that the heart of the plainer folk and, in particular, the common soldiery rested confidingly in the great Virginian, trusting in his sincerity if at times doubtful, inappreciative of his genius and mentally reserving assent to the wisdom of his plans. Early in the struggle Francis Hopkinson voiced this estimate: "To him the title of Excellency is applied with peculiar propriety. . . . In private life, he wins the hearts and wears the love of all who are so happy as to fall within the circle of his acquaintance. In his public character, he commands universal respect and admiration. Conscious that the principles on which he acts are indeed founded in virtue and truth, he steadily pursues the arduous work with a mind neither depressed by disappointment and difficulties, nor elated with temporary success. He retreats like a general, and attacks like a hero. . . . One age cannot do justice to his merit; but a grateful posterity shall for a succession of ages remember the great deliverer of his country."[1]

Of the bards of '76, as has been said in the text, none but three or four have left a name to be remembered even by the student and only one, Philip Freneau, can be said to have survived in American letters,—if, indeed, of even him it may be so asserted. He, the most prolific and the most able of all, wrote little above mediocrity though

1. Miscellaneous "Essays and Occasional Writings": I, 120.

much that was below it,—far below, at times. These later years have witnessed not a little endeavor to revive an interest in the writings of this singer of our earlier day. The late Professor Tyler, just quoted, in his monumental "Literary History of the American Revolution," speaks enthusiastically of Freneau: "Even in the larger relations which an American poet in the eighteenth century might hold to the development of English poetry everywhere, Freneau did some works, both early and late, so fresh, so original, so unhackneyed, so defiant of the traditions that then hampered and deadened English verse—as to entitle him to be called a pioneer of the new poetic age that was then breaking upon the world, and therefore to be classed with Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, and their mighty comrades—those poetic iconoclasts who, entering the temple of eighteenth century English verse broke up its wooden idols, rejected its conventionalized diction, and silenced forever its pompous, monotonous, and insincere tune."[1] Elsewhere,[2] the same critic asserts that Freneau was "a true man of genius, the one true poet of unquestionable originality granted to America prior to the nineteenth century." "Indeed," declares Tyler, "a running commentary on the writings of this poet during the last three or four years of the revolution, would be a running commentary on the most important aspects of our history during those years."[3]

Professor Wendell in his "Literary History of America," maintains,[4] that, "In one or two of his [Freneau's]

1. II, 274.
2. Stanton: "Manual of American Literature," 42.
3. Ibid., 43.
4. P. 130.

poems, it now seems probable we can find more literary merit than in any other work produced in America before the nineteenth century."

A little more than a decade ago a notable revival of interest appeared in the three-volume edition of the poet's work under the editorial care of Professor Pattee.

Our own estimate of Philip Freneau would be that he was a most considerable writer of readable verse during our Revolutionary era and after; that he was frequently not unoriginal; that he possessed rather remarkable versatility and that his verse, circulating widely in its day, had through its piquant characterization a marked influence upon the spirits of the men who fought against their king.

With Freneau was a galaxy of verse-stars far from lacking in brilliancy—men who viewed their fellows, the issues and events of their time, with an oftentimes very clear discernment, overstating their case, it is true, on occasion, but when read with others of their calling on the loyal side, furnishing forth a picture of their day and generation wherein one may discover the lights as well as the shadows of a great conflict, the gay and the hearty with the sad and the despairing, humor, pathos and bitter tragedy—all that went to the making of life when strong men lived and brave women, too, who stood by their faith with a patient courage and stern devotion worthy the respect and veneration which posterity has not forgotten to bestow.

APPENDIX

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